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## THESIS

**CHINA'S EVOLVING FOREIGN POLICY IN AFRICA: A  
NEW DIRECTION FOR CHINA'S NON-INTERVENTION  
STRATEGY?**

by

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September 2014

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FOR CHINA'S NON-INTERVENTION STRATEGY?**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis analyzes China's foreign policy towards the African continent to identify and explain any potential shift away from China's previous non-intervention strategy towards African nations. China's economic relationship with the African continent has grown considerably during the last two decades and reshaped China's political relationship with the continent.

Findings offer three main drivers—economic interests, Western pressure, and African pressure—compelling China towards a more interventionist role in the domestic affairs of African nations. Utilizing case studies from Mali and Sudan, this thesis aims to investigate how each driver changed China's non-intervention strategy and identify what a change in China's non-intervention strategy might indicate for its policies globally.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>I.</b>	<b>CHINA’S EVOLVING FOREIGN POLICY IN AFRICA: A NEW DIRECTION FOR CHINA’S NON-INTERVENTION STRATEGY? .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>A.</b>	<b>IMPORTANCE.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>B.</b>	<b>LITERATURE REVIEW .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>C.</b>	<b>BACKGROUND ON CHINESE NON-INTERVENTION.....</b>	<b>6</b>
1.	Economic Interests.....	7
2.	Western Pressure .....	10
3.	African Pressures .....	13
<b>D.</b>	<b>PROBLEMS AND HYPOTHESES .....</b>	<b>14</b>
1.	Economic Interests.....	15
2.	Western Pressure .....	15
3.	African Pressures .....	16
<b>E.</b>	<b>METHODS AND SOURCES .....</b>	<b>17</b>
1.	Economic.....	18
2.	Western Pressure .....	19
3.	African Pressure.....	19
<b>II.</b>	<b>NON-INTERVENTION IN CHINESE FOREIGN POLICY .....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>A.</b>	<b>THE ORIGINS OF NON-INTERVENTION.....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>B.</b>	<b>CHINA AND THE RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT .....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>C.</b>	<b>CHINA’S CRITIQUE OF R2P IN LIBYA .....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>D.</b>	<b>CHINESE FOREIGN POLICY ON THE AFRICAN CONTINENT .....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>E.</b>	<b>CHINA’S 2006 WHITE PAPER .....</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>F.</b>	<b>CONCLUSION .....</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>III.</b>	<b>CASE STUDY MALI .....</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>A.</b>	<b>BACKGROUND TO THE CONFLICT IN MALI .....</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>B.</b>	<b>ECONOMIC INTERESTS .....</b>	<b>39</b>
1.	Mali-China Economic Ties.....	40
2.	Maintaining Regional Stability.....	42
3.	Protecting Chinese Citizens and Infrastructure .....	45
4.	China’s Response to Conflict in Mali.....	46
<b>C.</b>	<b>WESTERN PRESSURES .....</b>	<b>49</b>
1.	Combating Terrorism.....	49
2.	Avoiding the “Free Rider” Stigma .....	51
<b>D.</b>	<b>AFRICAN PRESSURES.....</b>	<b>53</b>
1.	Malian Government’s Request for Assistance .....	54
2.	Regional and Sub-Regional Organizations.....	55
3.	China’s Response to Requests from Mali .....	56
<b>E.</b>	<b>CONCLUSION .....</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>IV.</b>	<b>SUDAN AND SOUTH SUDAN .....</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>A.</b>	<b>CHINA-SUDAN BACKGROUND.....</b>	<b>62</b>
1.	Darfur.....	64

B.	ECONOMIC INTERESTS .....	67
1.	Chinese Infrastructure Investment in Sudan .....	67
2.	Economic Interests in South Sudan.....	70
3.	Ethnic Conflict in South Sudan .....	72
C.	WESTERN PRESSURE.....	75
1.	South Sudan.....	76
D.	AFRICAN PRESSURE .....	79
1.	Regional and Sub-regional Organizations.....	80
E.	CONCLUSION .....	82
V.	CONCLUSION .....	85
A.	SUMMARY OF FINDINGS .....	85
1.	Economic Interests.....	86
2.	Western Pressure .....	87
3.	African Pressure.....	88
B.	IMPLICATIONS OF CHINA’S SHIFTING FOREIGN POLICY .....	89
	LIST OF REFERENCES .....	93
	INITIAL DISTRIBUTION LIST .....	103

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.	China and Africa's Growing Trade Relationship .....	3
Figure 2.	China's Main Import Products from Africa (%).....	8
Figure 3.	China's Top Export Products to Africa (%) .....	9
Figure 4.	Mali Exports to China .....	41
Figure 5.	Mali Imports from China .....	42
Figure 6.	Sahel Region .....	43
Figure 7.	China's Net Electricity Generation by Fuel, 2010–2040 .....	44
Figure 8.	Chinese Import from Sudan .....	63
Figure 9.	Greater Nile Oil Pipeline .....	68
Figure 10.	South Sudan Oil Infrastructure .....	71

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## **LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

AQIM	Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
AU	African Union
CNPC	China National Petroleum Corporation
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EX-IM	China Export-Import Bank
FDI	foreign direct investment
GDP	gross domestic product
GNPOC	Greater Nile Petroleum Operating Company
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
MINUSMA	Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali
MNLA	Movement for the National Liberation of Azawad
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
R2P	responsibility to protect
SINOUC	China Nuclear International Uranium Corporation
SOMINA	Societe des Mines d’Azelik
UN	United Nations
ZXJOY	Zhongxing Joy Investment Company

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# **I. CHINA'S EVOLVING FOREIGN POLICY IN AFRICA: A NEW DIRECTION FOR CHINA'S NON-INTERVENTION STRATEGY?**

President Hu Jintao's diplomatic trip to Sudan in 2007 marked a major shift in Chinese non-interventionist foreign policy towards the beleaguered nation. In a significantly new role, Chinese leadership encouraged the Sudanese government to accept peacekeepers in Darfur to relieve the conflict. China's action in Sudan may indicate the beginning of a larger Chinese shift away from non-intervention in domestic affairs. If Sudan does mark the beginning of a new era in Chinese foreign policy, understanding the driving factors for such change may assist in identifying a change in Chinese foreign policy globally.

Have China's actions in Sudan demonstrated the beginning of a shift away from a non-interventionist driven foreign policy towards Africa? If so, what explains China's move away from non-intervention? In this thesis, I plan to analyze the evolution of the Chinese non-interventionist driven foreign policy in Africa towards a more interventionist role—as witnessed in Sudan—to identify what drivers have initiated such a shift. For this thesis, intervention will be defined across a spectrum from low to high Chinese intervention in two countries—Sudan and Mali—to assess how Chinese foreign policy towards each nation may have evolved over time.

In analyzing the potential for a shift in China's non-intervention strategy, my first chapter will outline the importance of identifying a potential change and its implications for U.S.-China interactions on the African continent. I will include background information on Chinese involvement in Africa and some of the commonly held concerns. Many of these concerns center on the non-interventionist approach towards accessing natural resources and what non-intervention means in Chinese foreign policy towards Africa.

After studying the 2013 French-led intervention in Mali and the 2007 Darfur crisis in Sudan, evidence points to three main drivers pressing China's shift towards intervention on the African continent—Economic interests, Western pressure, and African pressure. As China's economic interests have increased in African nations, its

efforts to protect them has also increased. China has significant economic interests in not only Sudan and Mali, but the broader regions surrounding each nation. The porous border structure in many African nations leaves a threat in one nation, a threat to many—forcing China to protect its economic interests regionally. Western pressure threatened China’s international image and detracted from its desire to become a responsible world leader. In an attempt to avoid its past image as a “free rider” in the international community, China chose to abide by Western pressure in Mali and Sudan and assisted in intervening. African pressure derived from individual African nations and regional, and sub-regional organizations compelled China to act or risk harming its image as “mutual beneficial” partner to African nations. Had China abstained from assisting Mali—despite Mali’s own request for assistance—China’s image on the continent would have suffered and decreased its ability to achieve its political objectives.

The remainder of the first chapter will offer my hypothesis—which contends Chinese economic interests, Western pressure, and African pressure are driving Chinese foreign policy away from non-intervention—along with a description of methods and sources to be used throughout the remainder of the thesis. I will also outline previous literature focused on the three drivers of a Chinese shift from non-interference—economic interests, Western pressure, and African pressure—to discuss how each might be changing China’s calculus towards a more interventionist driven foreign policy. I will outline each driver with background information and the potential causal argument influencing China’s evolution towards intervention.

## **A. IMPORTANCE**

The recent U.S. rebalance towards Asia highlights the underlying U.S. concerns of China’s rise as an economic superpower.<sup>1</sup> Within the Chinese economic expansion

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<sup>1</sup> Catherine Dale and Pat Towell, *In Brief: Assessing DOD’s New Strategic Guidance* (CRS Report No. R42146) (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2012).

globally, Chinese economic activity in Africa has soared in the last decade. At present, China is Africa's number one trading partner with trade rising from just \$3 billion in 1995, to over \$166 billion at present.<sup>2</sup>

The United States is concerned about China's activities in Asia and its increased global presence—as witnessed across Africa. While China and the African continent hold a well-connected past based on mutual benefit, China's economic growth has slowly begun to change the relationship in recent years. See Figure 1.

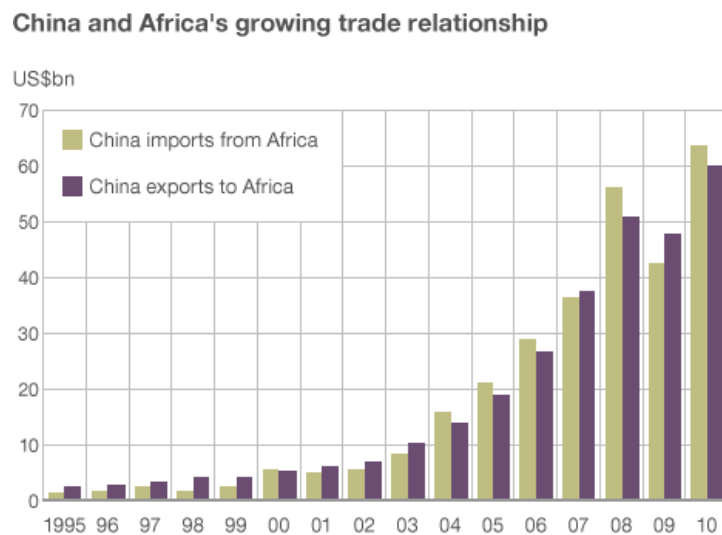


Figure 1. China and Africa's Growing Trade Relationship<sup>3</sup>

China's shift to a more interventionist position in the domestic affairs of African nations, if fully understood, introduces new opportunities for cooperation with the U.S. and European development strategies. The Chinese development strategy offers aid without the conditions tied to those of Western backed development programs. Critiques of China's non-intervention strategy denounce its lack of attention to basic human rights

<sup>2</sup> "More Than Minerals: Chinese Trade with Africa Keeps Growing; Fears of Neocolonialism Are Overdone," *The Economist*, March 23, 2013, <http://www.economist.com/news/middle-east-and-africa/21574012-chinese-trade-africa-keeps-growing-fears-neocolonialism-are-overdone-more>; "Never Too Late to Scramble," *The Economist*, October 26, 2006, <http://www.economist.com/node/8089719>.

<sup>3</sup> "Viewpoint: Africa Must Do More to Profit from China," *BBC News*, May 21, 2012, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-18143515>.

and the threat it presents towards U.S. good governance programs. Conversely, Chinese development projects promote an economic first approach with an emphasis on infrastructure development, which China claims, is better sustained in the long term. A responsibly engaged China in domestic affairs, however, offers additional insight beyond the Western approach towards development and could potentially assist the United States in achieving its foreign policy goals across the continent in terms of promoting peace and security.

Skeptics of Chinese involvement throughout Africa criticize China's focus towards African natural resources and ignoring human rights. If approached responsibly, Chinese economic investment in African infrastructure and trade could assist in achieving the development goals of African nations. A responsible China increasing its awareness of domestic affairs in African nations promotes a mutually beneficial relationship beyond purely economic interests. Assessing the drivers of a shift in Chinese non-intervention within African nations also provides a case study for potential Chinese foreign policy shifts across the globe.<sup>4</sup>

The importance of identifying a potential shift in Chinese foreign policy extends beyond the continent of Africa and encapsulates a global question concerning China's actions as it continues to grow. China's extending footprint in Latin America, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia all provide an opportunity for a similar shift away from non-interference. Studying China's actions on the African continent could provide a basis for understanding if Africa is an exception for China's shifting foreign policy, or the beginning a future global trend.

Since the end of the Cold War, Chinese foreign policy centered on non-intervention in the domestic affairs of other nations. One of the few areas of interventionist policies China supported was under the subset of peacekeeping operations (PKOs). China authorized minimal participation in PKOs under three conditions: (1) if the operation has UN authorization, (2) is requested from the state requiring intervention,

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<sup>4</sup> Alula Iyasu, "China's Non-Interference Policy and Growing African Concerns," African Arguments, July 18, 2013, <http://africanarguments.org/2013/07/18/china%E2%80%99s-non-interference-policy-and-growing-african-concerns/>.

and (3) guarantees the protection of the national sovereignty of all states involved.<sup>5</sup> As China continues to strive for economic and political influence around the world, its interactions with African states provides case studies for the evolution of Chinese foreign policy. While initially attempting to maintain a non-interventionist policy on the continent, greater dependency on the materials sourced from African nations spurred increased Chinese interest in maintaining stability within partner nations. China's previous dedication to non-intervention is found in its own early history of being manipulated by outside powers and its desire to deter outside intervention in its own affairs. As China's relationships with African nations have become more economically focused, however, China's non-intervention ideals have become more flexible in definition. China has invested billions in oil infrastructure in South Sudan, for example, but because of the current conflict, it has lost 20 percent of oil production and deployed 850 troops while also being forced to evacuate Chinese workers.<sup>6</sup> This thesis identifies the growing Chinese support of PKOs and armed interventions in areas across the African continent where Chinese material interests are especially significant.

Researching Chinese foreign policy in Africa provides a basis for understanding future Chinese interactions not only across the African continent but also around the globe. Understanding the changing nature of Chinese foreign policy can identify potential areas for Western cooperation with China—particularly when working through regional or sub-regional organizations in Africa—along with areas of contention. When the West approved sanctions against Sudan, China was placed in a position between pressures from Western-backed human rights organizations and China's own energy concerns. The increased role of the international community—mainly the West—presses China towards increased awareness for human rights and away from non-intervention in domestic

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<sup>5</sup> Allen Carlson, "More than Just Saying No," in *New Directions in the Study of China's Foreign Policy*, ed. Alastair Iain Johnston (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), 217.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid; Sudarsan Raghavan, "With Oil at Stake, South Sudan's Crisis Matters to its Customers," *The Washington Post*, January 20, 2014, [http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/africa/with-oil-at-stake-the-war-in-south-sudan-matters-to-its-customers/2014/01/20/dcca9432-7d25-11e3-97d3-b9925ce2c57b\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/africa/with-oil-at-stake-the-war-in-south-sudan-matters-to-its-customers/2014/01/20/dcca9432-7d25-11e3-97d3-b9925ce2c57b_story.html); Drazen Jorgic, "China Takes More Assertive Line in South Sudan Diplomacy," Reuters, June 5, 2014, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/06/05/us-southsudan-china-insight-idUSKBN0EG00320140605>.

affairs. The rise of China as a global power means non-intervention is no longer acceptable to the international community as a mainstay in Chinese foreign policy.<sup>7</sup>

## **B. LITERATURE REVIEW**

The literature review pertaining to my research question will provide a foundation for identifying any Chinese foreign policy shift on the African continent. The hypothesis for this thesis is derived from the literature review will be separated into four parts. A background section will address broad level Chinese foreign policy actions in Africa, and the remaining three sections will address the hypotheses that economic interest, Western pressure, and African pressure are the main drivers in motivating Chinese foreign policy towards a more interventionist role.

## **C. BACKGROUND ON CHINESE NON-INTERVENTION**

The evolution of Chinese foreign policy in relation to non-interventionism requires first identifying the early Chinese stance on sovereignty. At the center of the international system, national sovereignty secures the rights of nations to act independently in a manner best suited for the populace and general well-being of that nation. China historically faced numerous infringements on its sovereignty, which helped fuel underlying calls for non-intervention in the affairs of others and develop a strong belief in defending against violations of sovereignty encroachments. The post-Cold War period marked the beginning of a gradual shift in Chinese foreign policy towards limited and highly calculated participation in multilateral interventions.<sup>8</sup>

Africa provides a unique context for understanding the gradual shift in Chinese foreign policy following the Cold War as calls for intervention were prevalent throughout the 1990s. As early as 1991, China offered limited support to operations in Somalia

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<sup>7</sup> Chris Alden, "China in Africa," *Survival* 47, no. 3 (2005): 159–160, doi: 10.1080/00396330500248086; Zhongying Pang, "China's Non-Intervention Question," *Global Responsibility to Protect* 1, no. 2 (March 1, 2009): 237–238, doi: 10.1163/187598409X424315.

<sup>8</sup> Carlson, "More Than Just Saying No" 218, 223; Zhongying Pang, "Playing by 'The Rules': Is China a Partner or Ward?," *Spiegel Online*, October 17, 2008, <http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/playing-by-the-rules-is-china-a-partner-or-ward-a-584758.html>.

during the massive humanitarian crisis there. Chinese support was reluctant and limited in comparison to Western standards, but for Chinese policymakers, it marked an early foray into interventionist politics.<sup>9</sup>

The gradual rise of Chinese intervention—through its participation in PKOs—in the 1990s took place in an international context that observed a growing trend in PKOs worldwide. The number of Western backed peace keeping interventions skyrocketed in the 1990s and the growing trend transferred to Chinese foreign policy. China gradually followed suit in international affairs to take a more flexible role in peacekeeping operations—mainly through multilateral means—while also attempting to protect national sovereignty.<sup>10</sup>

### **1. Economic Interests**

The post-Cold War period instituted a new trend towards increased intervention worldwide, while also witnessing China's rise as an economic superpower. Chinese companies turned towards the African continent for access to natural resources to fuel a growing China. Chinese economic expansion in Africa grew rapidly, so that today a quarter of Chinese energy imports are derived from African nations.<sup>11</sup> While energy exports still maintain a high percentage of overall Chinese imports from Africa (see Figure 2), China has aimed to diversify its trade with African nations and begun investing in agriculture, technology, and manufacturing sectors.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Carlson, "More Than Just Saying No," 224.

<sup>10</sup> Carlson, *New Directions in the Study of China's Foreign Policy*, 219–220.

<sup>11</sup> Manjo and Marks, "African Perspectives on China in Africa," 21.

<sup>12</sup> Iyasu, "China's Non-Interference Policy and Growing African Concerns."

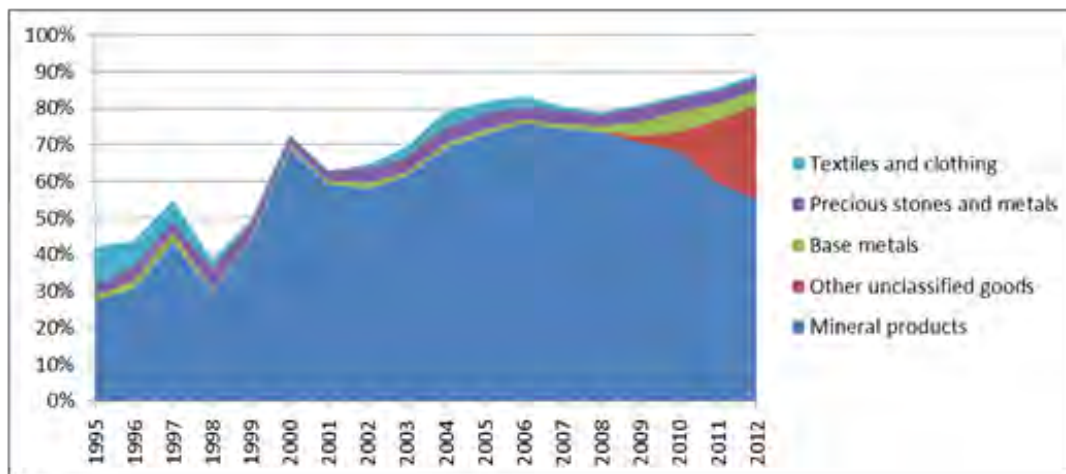


Figure 2. China's Main Import Products from Africa (%)<sup>13</sup>

China's investment in manufacturing across the continent provides lesser-developed African nations an opportunity to move away from dependence on exporting raw materials and move towards exporting processed goods that are less susceptible to market fluctuation.<sup>14</sup> For China, increasing manufacturing and production capabilities opens new opportunities for Chinese investment and market diversification. The African continent also provides China with new markets for Chinese produced goods (see Figure 3). Through increased Chinese economic interaction with Africa over the last decade, China has been compelled to pay increasing attention to the domestic affairs of trading partners—particularly security and stability—to make certain trade is allowed to continue to flourish.<sup>15</sup> Increased instability, as will be discussed in greater detail later on in each case study, increases the risks to Chinese infrastructure and personnel, while also increasing operating costs associated with the extraction of natural resources.

<sup>13</sup> Open Society Foundation for South Africa, "Africa-China Trading Relationship," South African Foreign Policy Initiative, August 14, 2013, <http://www.safpi.org/news/article/2013/africa-china-trading-relationship>.

<sup>14</sup> Alden, "China in Africa," 148.

<sup>15</sup> Southern African Development Community (SADC) Today, "China, Africa Target "New Strategic Partnership," August 2012, <http://www.sardc.net/editorial/sadctoday/view.asp?vol=2359&pubno=v14n5>.



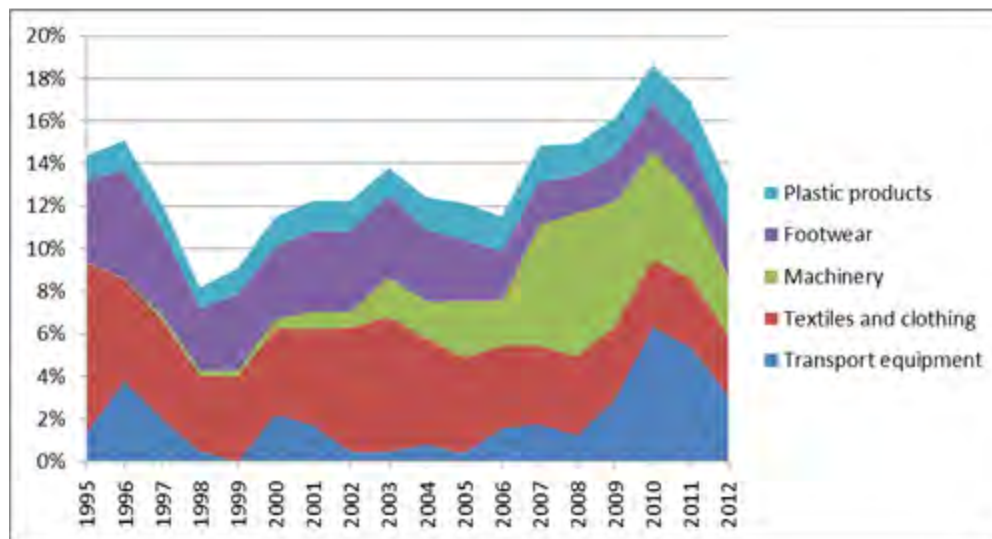


Figure 3. China's Top Export Products to Africa (%)<sup>16</sup>

China's rapid growth requires unimpeded access to oil and other natural resources to sustain the massive construction projects and heavy industrial enterprises domestically. From 2001 to 2007, China's oil demands measured nearly 40 percent of the overall growth in global oil demand.<sup>17</sup> China has also taken steps to ensure protection of its oil security through the diversification of oil suppliers and routes—of which African nations play a key role.<sup>18</sup> As China expands its network of infrastructure at home and develops a middle class, energy security will continue to be a major consideration for sustaining development.<sup>19</sup> With a majority of Chinese energy imports located in the developing world, instability creates grave concern for economic growth in China. China also understands the importance of avoiding the rolling blackouts of 2004, which occurred

<sup>16</sup> Open Society Foundation for South Africa, "Africa-China Trading Relationship."

<sup>17</sup> Erica Downs, "China's Energy Rise" in *China's Rise in Historical Perspective* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2010), 175.

<sup>18</sup> Erica S. Downs, "Insuring China's Energy Security," accessed May 16, 2014, <http://www.brookings.edu/events/2013/12/03-insuring-chinas-energy-security>.

<sup>19</sup> Catherine Wolfram, "Rising Middle Class Fuels Global Energy Surge," *BloombergView*, January 17, 2012, <http://www.bloombergview.com/articles/2012-01-17/rising-middle-class-fuels-global-energy-surge-catherine-wolfram>.

when a lack of coal-forced consumers to utilize oil fueled backup generators—skyrocketing China’s oil usage.<sup>20</sup> The continued expansion of the Chinese domestic economy requires China to maintain a close awareness of the domestic stability within trading partners to assist maintaining imports.<sup>21</sup>

The case study of Sudan provides perhaps the clearest picture of the Chinese dilemma in attempting to maintain a non-interventionist approach towards investments in Africa in the face of severe instability. While initially cooperating with the UN in 2004 to place an arms embargo on Sudan, China hesitated to approve sanctions against Khartoum in 2007. Citing the concern for exacerbating the crisis in Sudan, China held the belief that sanctions would only intensify instability and affect those least able to protect themselves.<sup>22</sup>

The Chinese non-intervention strategy appeared to be based on concerns for the domestic stability of Sudan and fears of intervention may lead to further instability in the region. However, the domestic stability of Sudan was directly connected to the economic security of China. Sudan had become China’s fifth largest oil supplier and introduced deep concern for Chinese foreign policy makers in the region. Refugees from the Sudan crisis also spilled into neighboring oil producing Chad threatening stability in other nations with Chinese economic interests. Internal instability within Sudan impeded China’s ability to access its oil resources, which grew China’s fear of a domestic energy import shortage and the associated economic impacts within China—thus compelling China to press Khartoum into accepting peacekeepers.<sup>23</sup>

## **2. Western Pressure**

The rise of Western backed interventions throughout the 1990s continually challenged the norms of Chinese foreign policy. Scholars identify the period of the 1990s

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<sup>20</sup> Downs, *China’s Rise in Historical Perspective*, 174–175.

<sup>21</sup> Elizabeth C. Economy, “The Game Changer: Coping with China’s Foreign Policy Revolution,” *Foreign Affairs* 89, no. 6 (2010): 146; Pang, “China’s Non-Intervention Question,” 242.

<sup>22</sup> Joel Wuthnow, *Chinese Diplomacy and the UN Security Council: Beyond the Veto* (London; New York: Routledge, 2012), 95.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

as the beginning of the social learning process in Chinese foreign policy through the efforts of the West and other nations with regards to human rights and responsibilities. Prior to this time, the rigid Chinese definition of national sovereignty allowed China to refrain from taking an active role in backing UN peacekeeping operations.<sup>24</sup>

With the increase of Western backed interventions in the 1990s, the norms associated with non-intervention changed across the international community. Under the direction of the major powers, the UN committed to a more interventionist role in conducting peace building and prevention activities. China slowly followed suit and began working through multilateral institutions to support peacekeeping operations. The continued rise of China as a global power only further increased the expectations from the international community for China to act in a responsible manner in accordance to international norms, such as the responsibility to protect (R2P). The forward-leaning approach of R2P contended with China's definition of non-intervention. China opposed the idea of conducting an international intervention without the support of a host-nation, but ultimately came to accept many provisions of the R2P doctrine, which will be discussed later. When participation in PKOs with host-nation support, however, China has propelled itself to the twenty-first most troop-contributing nation towards UN operations.<sup>25</sup>

The gradual diffusion of Western norms in Chinese foreign policy relied heavily on Chinese elites accepting a refined definition of sovereignty. Chinese policy makers had learned throughout the 1990s that improving China's international standing required some resemblance of accepting international norms. As Martha Finnemore discusses, the interests of states are directly connected to the international norms in which nations exist.<sup>26</sup> Multilateral institutions proved to be an important mechanism for Chinese

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<sup>24</sup> Carlson, "More Than Just Saying No," 219–220.

<sup>25</sup> Pang, "China's Non-Intervention Question," 238, 247; Carlson, *New Directions in the Study of China's Foreign Policy*, 220; Jochen Prantl and Ryoko Nakano, "Global Norm Diffusion in East Asia How China and Japan Implement the Responsibility to Protect," *International Relations* 25, no. 2 (June 1, 2011): 212, doi: 10.1177/0047117811404450.

<sup>26</sup> Martha Finnemore, *National Interests in International Society* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1996), 2.

adherence to international norms and provided the initial step towards increasing domestic influence abroad.<sup>27</sup>

Sudan marks a turning point in China's policy towards Sudan in which pressures from the international community and human rights organizations influenced China to intervene in Khartoum. China is well aware of the criticisms received during its handling of the Darfur crisis in which government forces instituted ethnic cleansing in response to armed rebel groups uprising against the Sudanese government.<sup>28</sup> China received criticism shortly after the beginning of the crisis in Darfur in 2003 for opposing sanctions against the Sudanese government while also selling weapons to Khartoum that were used against the Darfuris during ethnic cleansing.<sup>29</sup> While China continues to seek a middle ground between the protection of sovereignty and human rights, international reputation costs may challenge China's ability to promote non-intervention. In terms of Chinese political self-interest, maintaining a positive image in the international arena both increases China's standing amongst world powers and potentially reduces Western backed opposition towards China's quest for natural resources across the African continent.<sup>30</sup>

China's international reputation benefits from assuring the world it is more than a neo-colonial power and is capable of avoiding past mistakes made by previous emerging world powers. Chinese awareness of maintaining a positive international image derives from the acknowledgement that a China perceived as contributing towards the good of the international community is more capable of securing beneficial partnerships with African nations. With a positive international reputation, China reduces the likelihood of other world powers balancing against it, which allows China to more efficiently pursue both its domestic objectives and foreign policy objectives. China is able to devote more

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<sup>27</sup> Carlson, *New Directions in the Study of China's Foreign Policy*, 218.

<sup>28</sup> Wuthnow, *Chinese Diplomacy and the UN Security Council*, 96–97.

<sup>29</sup> Alden, "China in Africa," 159–160; Opheera McDoom, "China's Hu Tells Sudan It Must Solve Darfur Issue," *The Washington Post*, February 2, 2007, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/02/02/AR2007020200462.html>.

<sup>30</sup> Ian Taylor, *China's New Role in Africa* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2009), 178.

attention towards internal development and securing national power without being forced to prematurely compete against U.S. and Western backed pressure.<sup>31</sup>

### **3. African Pressures**

Across the African continent, regional and sub-regional organizations are increasing in capacity and legitimacy towards identifying and resolving conflicts. At its creation in 2004, the African Union (AU) embarked on a journey to promote peace and security through an interventionist approach in regional affairs.<sup>32</sup> The AU aimed to prevent genocide, war crimes, and other grave violations of human rights.<sup>33</sup> Legal provisions within the AU charter crafted an interventionist vision that called for the collective of African nations to intervene in the domestic affairs of other nations when severe human rights violations were presented.

The Chinese stance on non-intervention allows for intervention should a nation invite outside actors to assist, or with UN approval.<sup>34</sup> When confronted with Western pressure to intervene, China upholds its principles on sovereignty and likely perceives the intervention as illegitimate. At the request of the AU and sub-regional organizations including the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC), China is more willing to accept intervention in line with its own definition of sovereignty protection. China maintains it is unqualified to conduct intra-state conflict resolution on its own but when requested from African nations, is able to intervene.<sup>35</sup>

African pressure has changed China's calculus on intervention, as indicated with the announcement of China's "Initiative on China-Africa Cooperative Partnership for Peace and Security." The plan aims to,

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<sup>31</sup> Robert G. Sutter, *Chinese Foreign Relations: Power and Policy since the Cold War* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2012), 8.

<sup>32</sup> Tim Murithi, "The African Union's Evolving Role in Peace Operations: The African Union Mission in Burundi, the African Union Mission in Sudan and the African Union Mission in Somalia," *African Security Review* 17, no. 1 (2008): 73–74, doi: 10.1080/10246029.2008.9627460.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 74.

<sup>34</sup> Carlson, *New Directions in the Study of China's Foreign Policy*, 217.

<sup>35</sup> Li Anshan, "China and Africa: Policy and Challenges," *China Security* 3, no. 3 (2007): 76.

Deepen cooperation with the AU and African countries in maintaining peace and security in Africa, provide financial support for AU peacekeeping missions and the development of the African Standby Force, as well as train more security officials and peacekeepers for the AU.<sup>36</sup>

China's increased cooperation with the AU means China is less able to abstain from AU approved interventions for fear of increased local criticism, which may inhibit China's ability to achieve policy objectives. Conversely, Chinese intervention in a nation with AU support reduces the perception of China acting as a neo-colonial power and improves its overall reputation on the continent.<sup>37</sup>

#### **D. PROBLEMS AND HYPOTHESES**

The proposed hypothesis for this thesis derived from the proceeding literature review is that when combined, three drivers—economic interests, Western pressure, and African pressure—are pushing China towards a more interventionist role in its foreign policy towards African nations. In analyzing the last two decades of Chinese foreign policy in Africa, I will attempt to identify the recent shifts in Chinese interaction utilizing case studies. Throughout each case study, economic interests and African pressures likely carry the majority of weight influencing China's changing foreign policy on the continent.

My hypothesis outlines non-intervention on a spectrum from low to high intervention. The proposed definition identifies several factors, which will assist in identifying any shift in China's stance on intervention. For each potential driver considered, I will lay out the causal argument for why each may have pressed China into a more interventionist role in the domestic affairs of African nations.

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<sup>36</sup> An Lu, "President Hu Proposes New Measures to Boost China-Africa Ties," GOV.cn, July 19, 2012, [http://english.gov.cn/2012-07/19/content\\_2187416.htm](http://english.gov.cn/2012-07/19/content_2187416.htm); "China, Africa Target 'New Strategic Partnership,'" Southern African Development Community Today, August 2012, <http://www.sardc.net/editorial/sadctoday/view.asp?vol=2359&pubno=v14n5>.

<sup>37</sup> He Wen Ping, "China's African Policy," *Africa Review* 1, no. 1 (2009): 43–44, doi: 10.1080/09744053.2009.10597279.

## **1. Economic Interests**

The Chinese non-intervention foreign policy is changing in response to increasing Chinese economic interests across the continent. With increased economic interests, stability in African countries now directly affects China's interests. Continued Chinese access to African resources and the ability to sustain an uninterrupted flow of resources to support the Chinese economy has led China to intervene in the domestic affairs of its trading partners to try to promote security and regime stability.

China's economic interests on the African continent span beyond individual nations. The mainly porous borders and weak state structures of the African continent facilitate the flow of insecurity in one nation into neighboring nations—thereby requiring China to maintain a regional focus. Regional instability decreases China's efficiency in pursuing economic interests and increases the costs of sustaining trade. A continuation of non-interference would likely result in increased risks to Chinese economic interests and potential volatility due to instability. Similarly, with the increase in Chinese businesses within volatile African nations, protection of Chinese personnel and economic infrastructure compels China to take an increased awareness and action in the domestic security of trading partners.<sup>38</sup>

## **2. Western Pressure**

Western pressures are convincing China to take a more interventionist role across the African continent. Chinese foreign policy seeks to maintain partnerships and cooperation with the international community to promote Chinese political leadership domestically and globally.<sup>39</sup> Acting against Western norms damages China's international reputation and increases friction in bilateral relations while decreasing the likelihood of solving global issues. A positive reputation for China potentially decreases suspicions of China's rise from other nations and allows China's continued growth while minimizing the risk of nations balancing against it.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Downs, *China's Rise in Historical Perspective*, 176.

<sup>39</sup> Sutter, *Chinese Foreign Relations*, 5.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

The implementation of R2P serves as an example a changing Western backed norm towards intervention, which eventually received cautious Chinese support. Human rights organizations and Western governments wield a significant amount of power in drawing attention to the downfalls of Chinese non-intervention when human rights. The continued norm diffusion creates challenges towards China's attempt to withhold from interventions and increases Chinese involvement in domestic affairs of others to prevent human rights violations. Intervening in the name of terrorism is also considered a Western approach towards intervention. Typically cited as a major security concern to the West, anti-terrorism is commonly referred to as a Western motivation for intervention. China's declaration of the need to intervene in Mali due to terrorist concerns, demonstrates China's acquiesce towards Western pressure.

Criticism from the international community from China acting against Western pressure disrupts China's ability to focus on growth and avoid increased friction in achieving policy objectives. The Darfur crisis provides an example of how the international community rebuked China and decreased China's ability to pursue its policy objectives in Sudan concerning oil. Turning away from non-intervention—in response to Western pressure—improves China's reputation on the international stage and therefore prevents China from becoming marginalized and diverting focus away from its continued rise as a political power.

### **3. African Pressures**

China's non-intervention policy is predicated on the protection of sovereignty and the preservation of a nation's right to govern. An exception to the Chinese non-intervention strategy allows for intervention when a nation requests intervention within its own borders. When Western pressure alone may be limited in its ability to compel China to intervene, pressure from the African continent may hold more weight towards urging China to intervene. When requested from African nations or African regional and sub-regional organizations, intervention becomes acceptable in Chinese foreign policy and is less susceptible to negative reactions from the international community.



Support from the AU provides China a sense of local legitimacy apart from Western voices and provide China with a knowledgeable expert through which to provide support. Should China ignore requests from the AU to intervene, increased neo-colonialism rhetoric would likely emerge across the continent—potentially reducing China’s ability to develop strategic partnerships and thereby reducing China’s preferential access to trade. The growing capacity of regional organizations, sub-regional organizations, and civil societies across the African continent place an increased amount of pressure on China and therefore increase the likelihood of China to intervene in domestic affairs.

## **E. METHODS AND SOURCES**

I intend to utilize a comparative study throughout my thesis. The comparative study will be useful to determine the extent/degree of changes in Chinese intervention policies post-Cold War and following President Hu Jintao’s increased efforts towards engagement in Africa in 2007. I have selected two nations within Africa—Mali and Sudan—with varying levels of Chinese involvement to compare changes over time. Each nation has witnessed calls for intervention in recent years. In comparing between the two nations, the analysis will focus on events in which the U.S. or Western-backed entities have called for intervention and highlight Chinese response in each occurrence. In choosing to study Mali and Sudan, a comparison can be made between nations with varying levels of Chinese investment, but with similar levels of insecurity. The insecurity in each nation has led to calls for outside intervention from international actors—the 2012 Coup in Mali and the Sudan conflict—both between Sudan and South Sudan, and the more recent rebellion within South Sudan.

The definition of non-intervention used throughout this thesis is more broadly derived from China’s Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence adopted in 1954, which include, “Mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in each other’s internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful

coexistence.”<sup>41</sup> According to Chinese foreign policy, a nation’s sovereignty includes the political structure within each nation. Therefore, any nation attempting to disrupt the government of another nation is guilty of sovereignty infringement and will not receive Chinese support.

Throughout this thesis, non-intervention will be defined across a spectrum from low to high intervention using three determinants of non-intervention. Determinants include a willingness to participate in peacekeeping operations, participation and voting record in the UN, and conditionalities in aid dispersion.<sup>42</sup> Comparing between the three nations will provide a basis for identifying if and how economic interests, Western pressure, African pressure appear to have shaped Chinese responses throughout each intervention; specifically, the following topics.

## **1. Economic**

Using foreign direct investment (FDI), trade, infrastructure investment figures, and Chinese worker data, I plan to compare across each nation to determine how economic influences may have shaped Chinese foreign policy towards intervention over time. As China has increased its economic interaction with each nation over time, I will analyze the extent to which Chinese officials cited economic concerns and subsequently supported increased intervention. The two nations highlighted are useful case studies for analyzing the potential of an economic driver because each nation holds a relatively different level of Chinese FDI. Mali receives a relatively little Chinese FDI while Sudan receives substantially higher Chinese FDI.<sup>43</sup> I will also compare between presence and extent of Chinese business personnel and infrastructure in each nation to identify if a greater contingent of each appears to change China’s calculus towards intervention.

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<sup>41</sup> Mordechai Chaziza and Ogen S. Goldman, “Revisiting China’s Non-Interference Policy towards Intrastate Wars,” *The Chinese Journal of International Politics*, January 18, 2014, 94, doi: 10.1093/cjip/pot016.

<sup>42</sup> Pang, “China’s Non-Intervention Question,” 242; Chaziza and Goldman, “Revisiting China’s Non-Interference Policy towards Intrastate Wars,” 94.

<sup>43</sup> Ivar Kolstad and Arne Wiig, “Better the Devil You Know? Chinese Foreign Direct Investment in Africa,” *Journal of African Business* 12, no. 1 (2011): 36, doi: 10.1080/1536710X.2011.555259.

## **2. Western Pressure**

The timeframe of interventions studied lies within the greater context of China's increasing political and economic influence in international affairs (the establishment of United Nations Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) in response to the human rights violations in Sudan in 2007 and the French intervention in Mali in 2012 to defeat Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). Analyzing the statements and behaviors of Western governments during each intervention and comparing them to China's actions will assist in identifying if Western pressure affected China's decision to intervene. I will analyze early Western and Chinese responses to each crisis to determine if China's agenda shifts towards a more interventionist approach on the spectrum previously outlined.

## **3. African Pressure**

To identify the effect of African pressure on shaping China's intervention policy, I will analyze the reaction of local and regional actors to determine if their requests for intervention compelled China. I will also compare African pressure to Western pressure to highlight cases when Western pressure alone may have been insufficient to coerce China into intervening. I will focus on the responses of regional organizations within Africa—mainly the AU—to determine the strength of African pressure in soliciting Chinese intervention.

The analysis of China's actions in Mali and Sudan indicate China's move towards increased interventionism is based on three drivers—economic interests, Western pressure, and African pressure. On the spectrum from low to high intervention, both Mali and Sudan demonstrate a relatively high level of intervention. China's actions in Mali mainly consisted of troop contributions and UN support. In Sudan, however, China contributed troops and played an integral role in mediation efforts in both the Darfur crisis and disputes with South Sudan. Evidence from Chinese officials discussing the need to protect infrastructure in each case study, followed by increased troop commitments and mediation efforts, demonstrates China's economic interests driving its decision to intervene. Chinese statements outlining a desire to avoid Western labeling of China as a “free rider” in international politics and Western backlash to China's actions

in Darfur have resulted in China's stated acceptance of Western norms of intervention in Mali and Sudan. African pressure took the form of regional and sub-regional organizations directly requesting Chinese assistance. China subsequently provided troops to protect its image as a "mutual-beneficial" partner to African nations.

The remainder of this thesis is divided into three chapters. Chapter III will provide background on Chinese non-intervention based foreign policy and identify gradual shifts witnessed since the end of the Cold War. This section will assist in providing context towards understanding a broader shift in Chinese foreign policy towards the African continent. I will include information on China's acceptance of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) doctrine and its potential influence toward China's non-intervention strategy.

Chapters III and IV will consist of case studies outlining the situations in Sudan and Mali. I will provide a background section on each crisis, followed by a discussion on how each driver outlined in my hypothesis has influenced China's foreign policy behavior. The final chapter will consist of a statement of findings, a comparison between case studies, and a discussion on the future implications of China's shifting foreign policy on the African continent.

## II. NON-INTERVENTION IN CHINESE FOREIGN POLICY

At the center of the international system, national sovereignty secures the rights of nations to act independently in a manner best suited for the populace and general well-being of that nation.<sup>44</sup> Following the early establishment of sovereign states defined under the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648, success of the international system has largely depended on maintaining each nation's right to rule.<sup>45</sup> While the foundations of sovereignty have existed for centuries, a gradual global norm shift towards increased intervention has appeared throughout the last two decades—slowly influencing China's definition of non-intervention.<sup>46</sup>

This chapter aims to identify the evolution of China's non-interventionist driven foreign policy. Through its historical experiences, China became markedly sensitive to sovereignty infringements and aimed to promote its definition of sovereignty in international affairs. In this chapter, I will first discuss historical events in China leading to the development of its non-intervention strategy. Second, I will outline the changing international norms concerning intervention and China's response—specifically through the implementation of R2P. Finally, I will discuss the evolution of China's non-interventionist driven foreign policy on the African continent to identify more recent factors leading to China's movement away from non-intervention.

### A. THE ORIGINS OF NON-INTERVENTION

China historically faced numerous infringements on its sovereignty, which arguably fueled its hypersensitive and defensive stance on non-intervention in the affairs of others. The period between 1839 and 1949 is commonly referred to as China's

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<sup>44</sup> Allen Carlson, "Protecting Sovereignty, Accepting Intervention: The Dilemma of Chinese Foreign Relations in the 1990s," *National Committee on United States-China Relations*, 2002, 1, [http://www.ncusr.org/files/3.%20Protecting%20Sovereignty,%20Accepting%20Intervention%20\(18\).pdf](http://www.ncusr.org/files/3.%20Protecting%20Sovereignty,%20Accepting%20Intervention%20(18).pdf).

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Carlson, *New Directions in the Study of China's Foreign Policy*, 219.

“Century of Humiliation.”<sup>47</sup> During the course of approximately 110 years, China witnessed Western powers stake claim to Chinese treaty ports to fuel the needs of the West while also carving up and occupying its territory. China’s limited ability to resist highlighted the inadequacies of the Chinese military and government capabilities in comparison to those of the West.<sup>48</sup> This disruptive century in Chinese history serves as a unifying call for the Chinese national identity—praising China’s ability to rise above the humiliation of the early Western intervention.<sup>49</sup>

Territorial disputes in and around its borders also fueled China’s predisposition to non-intervention.<sup>50</sup> China’s fears of separatist threats in Tibet, Xinjiang, Taiwan, and others drove China’s promotion of non-intervention. The perceived threat of outside powers assisting separatist movements within its own territories, drives China to promote national sovereignty and scrutinize intervention elsewhere.<sup>51</sup>

Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping created the early PRC government to be highly centralized in its foreign policy development.<sup>52</sup> Successive leadership, however, gradually expanded the discussion of foreign policy development to include non-governmental organizations with the aim of promoting stability for domestic growth in China.<sup>53</sup> Within the foreign policy realm, China’s stance on non-intervention continued to remain an important piece of the overall Chinese foreign policy strategy.

After the Cold War, a steady shift in Chinese foreign policy towards limited and highly calculated participation under certain conditions in multilateral interventions

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<sup>47</sup> Alison Kaufman, *The ‘Century of Humiliation’ and China’s National Narratives*, “Testimony before the U.S. China Economic and Security Review Commission, Hearing on “China’s Narratives Regarding National Security Policy, March 10, 2011, 2, <http://www.uscc.gov/sites/default/files/3.10.11Kaufman.pdf>

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> William A. Callahan, “National Insecurities: Humiliation, Salvation, and Chinese Nationalism,” *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political* 29, no. 2 (March 1, 2004): 202, doi: 10.1177/030437540402900204.

<sup>50</sup> Prantl and Nakano, “Global Norm Diffusion in East Asia,” 212.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Marc Lanteigne, *Chinese Foreign Policy: An Introduction*, 2nd ed. (London; New York: Routledge, 2013), 18.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 18–19.

began.<sup>54</sup> Following on the growing trend in international politics concerning intervention, China reluctantly joined the discussion and supported UN resolutions condemning Iraq in 1990.<sup>55</sup> Beginning with the Gulf War in 1990, China's stance towards intervention took measured steps in adopting the evolving international norm.<sup>56</sup> The first Gulf War displayed a combination of trepidation and disjointedness towards Chinese support for intervention. Initially, China voted in favor of the UN Security Council resolution against Iraq's invasion of Kuwait.<sup>57</sup> Scholars attribute China's early backing of the Gulf War as a response to pressures from the U.S. and the unanimity of agreement within the international community towards stopping Iraq.<sup>58</sup> China subsequently returned to its posture of non-intervention and abstained from further UN resolutions authorizing the use of force against Iraq.<sup>59</sup>

Chinese behavior for the remainder of the 1990s followed a similar approach of initial support for an intervention, pursued by misgivings citing sovereignty infringement. In 1992, China initially voted in favor of the UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR) to stabilize Yugoslavia but subsequently abstained from further votes to expand the scope of the mission.<sup>60</sup> China feared the growing international norm associated with intervention was threatening to disrupt the foundation of national sovereignty.<sup>61</sup> After several messy attempts at intervention around the world, the international community slowly retrenched from the practice of intervention, which lessened the friction between Chinese and Western definitions of intervention. Involvements such as Somalia and Kosovo refocused Western perceptions of promoting human rights through intervention. Chinese and

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<sup>54</sup> Carlson, *New Directions in the Study of China's Foreign Policy*, 218, 223; Pang, "Playing by 'The Rules.'"

<sup>55</sup> Carlson, *New Directions in the Study of China's Foreign Policy*, 222.

<sup>56</sup> Carlson, "Protecting Sovereignty, Accepting Intervention," 7.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Carlson, "More Than Just Saying No," 224.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 222–223.

Western norms for intervention would cross paths once again, however, with the implementation of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P).<sup>62</sup>

## **B. CHINA AND THE RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT**

The growing debate in the international community between maintaining sovereignty and protecting human rights resulted in the establishment of the R2P doctrine at the 2005 World Summit.<sup>63</sup> The release of an International Commission on Intervention and Sovereignty (ICISS) report in 2001 prompted the early discussion on establishing a set of international rules to prevent human rights violations.<sup>64</sup> R2P ushered into the international community tangible proof of a changing norm in the responsibilities of nations to protect the human rights of citizens worldwide. The ICISS report served as the precursor to R2P and sought to identify roles and responsibilities of the international community through a set doctrine.<sup>65</sup> While the initial agenda of the ICISS report sought binding requirements for intervention, R2P removed mention of legally binding requirements in its establishment in 2005 in favor of a less obligatory doctrine to attract Chinese acceptance.<sup>66</sup>

The adoption of R2P stressed the responsibility of each nation “to protect its populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity.”<sup>67</sup> The protection of individuals rests on the state itself, but should a nation be unable or unwilling to protect its own citizens, R2P calls on the international community to assist in the prevention of human rights violations.<sup>68</sup> The R2P strategy is based on three pillars—

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<sup>62</sup> Carlson, “Protecting Sovereignty, Accepting Intervention,” 9.

<sup>63</sup> Sarah Teitt, “China and the Responsibility to Protect,” Asia-Pacific Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, 2008, The University of Queensland, 8, [http://responsibilitytoprotect.org/files/China\\_and\\_R2P%5B1%5D.pdf](http://responsibilitytoprotect.org/files/China_and_R2P%5B1%5D.pdf)

<sup>64</sup> Gareth Evans et al, *The Responsibility to Protect Report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty*, International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, (December 2001). <http://responsibilitytoprotect.org/ICISS%20Report.pdf>.

<sup>65</sup> Prantl and Nakano, “Global Norm Diffusion in East Asia: How China and Japan Implement the Responsibility to Protect,” 209.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Teitt, “China and the Responsibility to Protect,” 3.

<sup>68</sup> United Nations General Assembly Security Council, “Responsibility to Protect: State Responsibility and Prevention,” July 9, 2013, 1, [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/67/929](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/67/929).



the host-nation's responsibilities, the international community's responsibilities, and the use of swift action to protect human rights—should it be required.<sup>69</sup>

With the increase of Western-backed interventions in the 1990s and the slowly shifting norms associated with non-intervention, R2P sought to avoid atrocities and to respond in the face of atrocities as witnessed in Rwanda in 1994. The massive loss of life in Rwanda occurred directly under what should have been the watchful eye of the international community. Although significant time had passed since the genocide in Rwanda, the international community sought to develop a consensus on when intervention should be considered to protect human rights. The African continent therefore became the focus of a growing debate on the need for intervention to protect human rights. The strengthening of international norms spread from the African continent and paved the way for the broader establishment of R2P.<sup>70</sup> The launch of R2P aimed to define not only the responsibilities of the international community, but also of individual states in the protection of human rights.<sup>71</sup> Initial discussions of the R2P concept received harsh criticism from Chinese policymakers—fearful the mandate would be used to justify unwarranted interventions in the domestic affairs of other nations.<sup>72</sup>

China's support towards peacekeeping operations matched its own highly calculated and sovereignty first approach towards intervention. This was in contrast to the more forward-leaning approach designed under R2P, which allowed for intervention regardless of if a host-nation requested it. China became the twenty-first most troop-contributing nation towards UN operations in 2010 but still maintained skepticism towards the far-reaching aims of R2P.<sup>73</sup> The Chinese response to R2P matched other

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<sup>69</sup> United Nations General Assembly Security Council, "Responsibility to Protect: State Responsibility and Prevention," 1.

<sup>70</sup> Prantl and Nakano, "Global Norm Diffusion in East Asia: How China and Japan Implement the Responsibility to Protect," 206–207.

<sup>71</sup> Evans et al., *The Responsibility to Protect Report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty*, 1.

<sup>72</sup> Teitt, "China and the Responsibility to Protect," 6.

<sup>73</sup> Pang, "China's Non-Intervention Question," 238, 247; Carlson, *New Directions in the Study of China's Foreign Policy*, 220; Prantl and Nakano, "Global Norm Diffusion in East Asia How China and Japan Implement the Responsibility to Protect," 212.

nations across East Asia that feared a growing trend in intervention threatened to remove the emphasis on national sovereignty. China's reluctance resulted in lengthy debates within the international community to determine exactly what role R2P would take in the protection of human rights.<sup>74</sup>

The Chinese approval of R2P during the 2005 World Summit was a major step in China's foreign policy evolution. China joined in with the unanimous agreement of members of the UN justifying the responsibility of the international community to take an active role in protecting the human rights of individuals worldwide.<sup>75</sup> Following the discussion at the 2005 World Summit, Security Council Resolution 1674 was put forward for international approval to the UN governing body. Resolution 1674 aimed to establish "the protection of civilians in armed conflict."<sup>76</sup> Despite initial reservations with signing the resolution, British-led negotiations prompted China to join the international community in support of Resolution 1674. China's decision to sign the agreement marked a milestone in the evolution of China's stance on non-intervention.<sup>77</sup>

Following the acceptance of R2P, China continued to caution the international community of the potential for overreach of R2P backed interventions. China's conservative focus of R2P hinged on its support for preventing conflict from occurring through building state capacity in at risk nations and in the belief that outside intervention can often make a situation worse.<sup>78</sup> China has argued the true utility of R2P is its ability to identify potential conflict drivers early and assist in providing solutions to prevent a conflict from escalating.<sup>79</sup> Chinese foreign policy experts made clear intervention is only acceptable in situations of "genocide, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity" and

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<sup>74</sup> Prantl and Nakano, "Global Norm Diffusion in East Asia: How China and Japan Implement the Responsibility to Protect," 211; Teitt, "China and the Responsibility to Protect," 8.

<sup>75</sup> Teitt, "China and the Responsibility to Protect," 8.

<sup>76</sup> "UN Security Council Resolution 1674," United Nations Security Council, April 26, 2006, 1, <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N06/331/99/PDF/N0633199.pdf?OpenElement>.

<sup>77</sup> Teitt, "China and the Responsibility to Protect," 8.

<sup>78</sup> Rosemary Foot, "The Responsibility to Protect (R2P) and Its Evolution: Beijing's Influence on Norm Creation in Humanitarian Areas," *St Antony's International Review* 6, no. 2 (2011): 49.

<sup>79</sup> Teitt, "China and the Responsibility to Protect," 9.

should protect the sovereignty of host nations.<sup>80</sup> Chinese policy makers also held firm to their belief that intervention should only be conducted when requested by a nation and never forced at the discretion of the international community.<sup>81</sup> Initially, Western and Chinese understandings of R2P appeared distinctly different, but as the case studies on Mali and Sudan demonstrate, the gap between the two is lessening.

### C. CHINA'S CRITIQUE OF R2P IN LIBYA

Chinese critiques of R2P were most recently voiced following the NATO-led Libyan intervention in 2011, which has been considered the first use of the R2P, mandate.<sup>82</sup> Chinese scholars, such as Ruan Zongze argue,

Supporters of responsibility to protect argue that armed intervention is a 'moral responsibility' as long as it is done for 'humanitarian purposes.' However, in practice, as Libya clearly showed, it has proved nothing more than the pursuit of hegemony in the name of humanity.<sup>83</sup>

China's critiques of the NATO operation in Libya argue R2P is simply the latest rendition of Western attempts to justify intervention in other nations—similar to its previous critiques of Kosovo.<sup>84</sup>

Chinese critics of R2P point out several key factors they believe should have been considered prior to intervention in Libya. First, Chinese scholars argue R2P overstepped its bounds during the Libyan intervention because it aimed to promote regime change in Libya—a concept directly at odds with the UN Charter, which should aim to protect government structures.<sup>85</sup> Second, Chinese scholars emphasize the necessity of a well-supported post-military intervention force to insure the restoration of long-term

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>82</sup> Ruan Zongze, "Responsible Protection," China U.S. Focus, March 16, 2012, <http://www.chinausfocus.com/foreign-policy/responsible-protection/>.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> Ruan Zongze, "Responsible Protection: Building a Safer World," China Institute of International Studies, June 15, 2012, [http://www.ciis.org.cn/english/2012-06/15/content\\_5090912.htm](http://www.ciis.org.cn/english/2012-06/15/content_5090912.htm).

stability.<sup>86</sup> Following the 2011 NATO intervention, Libya encountered power grabs by local militia forces resulting in severe insecurity and widespread violence. Third, the UN should be the only authorized entity allowed to intervene for humanitarian purposes—instead of a single nation or NATO.<sup>87</sup> This prevents interventions from becoming a tool for regime change at the will of the international community.

Chinese criticisms of Western efforts in Libya carried over to the ongoing crisis in Syria beginning in 2011. When China and Russia voted against military intervention in Syria, China used the Libyan example as justification for its unwillingness to intervene in Syria.<sup>88</sup> Instead, China called for a diplomatic solution to the violence and increased humanitarian assistance in the meantime.<sup>89</sup> As will be discussed during the Sudan chapter, China's deployment of military combat troops to South Sudan, and its direct mediation efforts between the two warring factions, displays a noticeably different tone of Chinese support in comparison to its critique of Libya.

#### **D. CHINESE FOREIGN POLICY ON THE AFRICAN CONTINENT**

Africa provides a unique context for understanding the gradual shift in Chinese foreign policy following the Cold War. In 1991, China offered limited assistance to operations in support of the massive humanitarian crisis in Somalia. Chinese support was reluctant and limited in comparison to Western standards, but for Chinese policymakers, it marked an early foray into interventionist politics.<sup>90</sup> The pattern of limited and cautious engagement continued to shape China's intervention policy across the African continent.

Chinese involvement in Africa began in the 1950s with the establishment of diplomatic ties between China and Egypt.<sup>91</sup> The Suez Crisis in 1956 found China supporting the Egyptian government and denouncing any efforts towards a Western

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> Carlson, *New Directions in the Study of China's Foreign Policy*, 224.

<sup>91</sup> Moreblessings Chidaushe, "China's Grand Re-Entrance into Africa-Mirage or Oasis?," in *African Perspectives on China in Africa*, ed. Firoze Manji and Marks Stephen (Cape Town: Fahamu, 2007), 108.

military intervention.<sup>92</sup> With the beginning of African independence movements in the 1960s, China offered support, recognition and foreign assistance to several newly established African nations. China was quick to offer mutual beneficial treaties focused on economic and technological cooperation.<sup>93</sup>

Within the context of the Cold War, China engaged in competition with the Soviet Union to gain influence on the African continent.<sup>94</sup> The broader competition between the Soviets and the West left China claiming to be the “true source of Marxism-Leninism.”<sup>95</sup> China’s opposition to not only the West, but also the Soviet Union, shaped its role as a supporter of African independence movements.<sup>96</sup> The Chinese government became an early supplier of military support to independence movements in Angola, Zimbabwe, and Mozambique.<sup>97</sup> At the same time, China also sought to secure recognition from African nations as the “one China” in efforts to erode support for Taiwan.<sup>98</sup>

The fall of the Soviet Union left China without a direct threat to its security and opened the door for large-scale domestic growth in China. Deng Xiaoping instituted economic reforms aimed at opening up China’s economy to international trade and China began on its path towards double-digit growth.<sup>99</sup> China’s increased emphasis placed on economic growth also influenced its renewed focus towards the African continent.

In 1996, Chinese President Jian Zemin offered a “Five Points Proposal” identifying China’s interests on the African continent.<sup>100</sup> Chinese foreign policy was outlined as, “centering around a reliable friendship, sovereign equality, non-intervention,

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<sup>92</sup> Nianlong Han, *Diplomacy of Contemporary China* (Hong Kong: New Horizon Press, 1990), 158.

<sup>93</sup> Han, *Diplomacy of Contemporary China*, 160.

<sup>94</sup> Victor Ojakorotu and Ayo Whetho, “Sino-African Relations: The Cold War Years and After,” *Asia Journal of Global Studies* 2, no. 2 (2009): 36.

<sup>95</sup> Michael B. Yahuda, *China’s Role in World Affairs* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1978), 148.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 153.

<sup>97</sup> Han, *Diplomacy of Contemporary China*, 161.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., 166.

<sup>99</sup> Sutter, *Chinese Foreign Relations*, 19.

<sup>100</sup> Alden, “China in Africa,” 147.

mutually beneficial development and international cooperation.”<sup>101</sup> The proposal highlighted the increasing role China sought to attain in the international system—in particular the African continent.<sup>102</sup>

Chinese expansion across the African continent provided partnerships with developing countries as an alternative to the unappealing strings attached to Western development projects.<sup>103</sup> The scope of China’s foreign policy towards African nations articulated mutual beneficial relationships and equality aimed to attract those nations dissatisfied with years of perceived failed Western development programs.<sup>104</sup> Chinese claims of mutual respect and mutual beneficial relationships between China and African nations also aimed to reduce fears of neo-colonialism from past outside encounters with world powers.<sup>105</sup>

China’s perceived need for strategic partnerships also drove its foreign policy towards the African continent.<sup>106</sup> The ability of China to secure partnerships with African nations provided China with multilateral support to promote its global interests—specifically in the WTO and UN.<sup>107</sup> Pressure from African nations represent a large portion of available multilateral support and enable China the ability to promote its agenda without relying on Western nations.<sup>108</sup>

China’s economic interests also largely influenced its foreign policy strategy during the 1990s towards the African continent. China’s shift from net exporter to net importer of energy in 1993 identified the beginning of what would be a thirst for resources that would one day match that of the U.S.<sup>109</sup> Today, a quarter of Chinese

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<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Denis M. Tull, “China’s Engagement in Africa: Scope, Significance and Consequences,” *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 44, no. 3 (September 1, 2006): 460.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> Chidaushe, “China’s Grand Re-Entrance into Africa-Mirage or Oasis?,” 109.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., 112.

<sup>106</sup> Alden, “China in Africa,” 152.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., 153.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., 148.

energy imports are derived from African nations.<sup>110</sup> China's increased dependency on resources from African nations has opened a growing dialogue in Chinese foreign policy towards Africa—including the role of intervention.

The large-scale growth of the Chinese economy led Chinese foreign policymakers to promote the opening of overseas markets.<sup>111</sup> Overseas markets like those found on the African continent provide China with a source of sustainable resources to maintain the needs of China's domestic economy. Chinese backed companies became a vital piece of China's foreign policy decisions on the African continent, and their ability to expand Chinese markets is vital to the economic stability of China.<sup>112</sup> It is through the expansion of Chinese industry across the African continent that intervention debates have met economic needs to increase China's attention towards security abroad.<sup>113</sup> China's ability to remain dedicated to a staunch non-interventionist foreign policy slowly evolved as China increased its reliance on African nations.

#### **E. CHINA'S 2006 WHITE PAPER**

In 2006, China released its white paper on China's African Policy detailing China's strategy towards the African continent. Within the paper, China emphasized its efforts to promote, "mutual trust, economic win-win cooperation and cultural exchange" across the continent.<sup>114</sup> The paper outlined China's increasing efforts towards cooperation with African regional organizations and the UN to promote development along with improved cooperation in political, economic, education, and security matters.<sup>115</sup>

Politically, China's white paper presents China's goals towards developing increased cooperation between Chinese and African nations. The policy calls for

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<sup>110</sup> Manjo and Marks, "African Perspectives on China in Africa," 21.

<sup>111</sup> Ping, "China's African Policy," 40.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

<sup>113</sup> Pang, "China's Non-Intervention Question," 247.

<sup>114</sup> "White Paper on China's African Policy, January 2006," *China Report* 43, no. 3 (July 2007): 377, doi: 10.1177/000944550704300309.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid., 377.

increased high-level visits aimed towards, “facilitating communication, deepening friendship and promoting mutual understanding and trust.”<sup>116</sup> Political considerations also focus on Chinese consultation with African nations and a stronger commitment towards promoting the principle roles of the UN Charter.<sup>117</sup>

China’s economic aims outlined in its white paper seek to increase trade, investment, infrastructure development, and resource cooperation.<sup>118</sup> The theme of Chinese economic involvement outlined in the white paper centers on mutual benefit and capacity building. China also claims it will seek out international cooperation to assist African nations in reaching stated development goals.

China’s peace and security goals towards the African continent aim to develop the capacities of African militaries. To accomplish this, China plans to increase military exchanges and cooperation with African nations while also assisting in training. China also asserts it will work through the UN to prevent and solve regional conflicts in Africa. China’s military support to conflict resolution will remain under its role in UN-led peacekeeping operations.

## **F. CONCLUSION**

Chinese rhetoric surrounding its non-intervention foreign policy has remained relatively constant, but its actions have slowly evolved towards a more interventionist foreign policy. The gradual increase of Chinese intervention in the 1990s took place in an international context that observed a growing trend in interventionism worldwide. The number of Western-backed peacekeeping interventions increased in the 1990s and the growing trend transferred to Chinese foreign policy. China gradually followed suit in international affairs to take a more flexible role in peacekeeping operations—mainly through multilateral means—while also attempting to protect national sovereignty.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> “White Paper on China’s African Policy, January 2006,” 378.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, 377.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, 380.

<sup>119</sup> Carlson, *New Directions in the Study of China’s Foreign Policy*, 219–220.



The continued rise of China as a global power only further increased expectations from the international community for China to act in a responsible manner in accordance with international norms, such as the responsibility to protect (R2P). Analyzing two case studies—Mali and Sudan—assists in further identifying the role economic interests, Western pressure, and African pressure have all combined to reshape China's definition of intervention on the African continent.

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### III. CASE STUDY MALI

The 2012 crisis in Mali demonstrated a new role for Chinese foreign policymakers on the African continent. Following the military led coup and Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)'s entrance into Northern Mali, the international community—led by the French—intervened to protect Malian civilians and stop the advance of AQIM. In accordance with the previously defined spectrum of intervention, China's deployment of combat peacekeeping troops for the first time in its history, and its voting in support of the UN intervention force, signaled a highly interventionist effort to resolve the crisis.<sup>120</sup> During the Mali crisis, China transitioned from opposition to intervention in Mali, to a highly interventionist stance following the In Amenas hostage Crisis in early January 2013.

This chapter examines the influence of China's economic interests, Western pressure, and African pressure on China's transition from hesitancy towards the French intervention in January 2013 to China's own deployment of combat troops in July 2013. Specifically, this chapter argues the security risk from AQIM threatened not only China's economic interest in Mali, but also its regional petroleum and uranium mining infrastructure—thus compelling China to take action to protect its broader economic interests. Following the January 2013 In Amenas hostage crisis, China deployed combat troops—demonstrating its increased attention to maintaining security of its own economic interests. Western pressure—largely under the Western established norm of intervention in the name of anti-terrorism—persuaded China to participate or be sidelined to Western efforts towards restoring stability in Mali. To bolster its image as a leader on the African continent, China chose to participate in intervening against the AQIM threat—despite China's earlier critique of U.S. counter-terrorism efforts as being a tool to expand U.S. influence. Finally, African pressures—sourced from Mali, the African Union (AU) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)—requested

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<sup>120</sup> Harrie Esterhuyse and Moctar Kane, *CCS Policy Briefing: China-Mali Relationship: Finding Mutual Benefit between Unequal Partners—The Centre for Chinese Studies* (Stellenbosh University: Centre for Chinese Studies, January 2014), 2, <http://www.ccs.org.za/?p=9097>.

international assistance, thereby convincing China to act or risk ruining its desired reputation as a mutually-beneficial and trusted advisor to African nations.

The findings for the Mali case identify China's economic interests as the most important factor in compelling China towards a highly interventionist approach based on its policy shift towards intervention following the in Amenas hostage crisis. Despite China's early misgivings towards intervention in Mali, as instability increased and threatened China's economic interest, China's support for intervention in Mali increased. China's extensive economic investment in the region, and the lessons it learned from Libya, pressed China to protect its investments in Mali following the end of the French-led intervention in July 2013. This chapter will begin with background information on the conflict in Mali, followed by a discussion of economic ties between China and Mali, and discussions on how economic interests, Western pressure, and African pressure influenced China's decision to intervene.

#### **A. BACKGROUND TO THE CONFLICT IN MALI**

The international community optimistically watched as Mali attempted its efforts towards democratic consolidation in West Africa. After years of tumultuous leadership transitions, Mali held its first elections in 1992.<sup>121</sup> The optimistic supporters of Mali's democratic transition quickly faded in 2012, however, following a military coup that resulted in massive instability across the nation—and potentially the region. Subsequent fighting between the Malian Army and a longstanding rebellion by the nomadic Tuaregs in the north paved the way for Al Qaeda in the Lands of the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)'s takeover of Northern Mali. The destabilization garnered significant Western attention and ultimately resulted in a French-led military intervention in January 2013.<sup>122</sup>

The history of instability in Northern Mali began with the establishment of borders under French colonial rule in the late 1800s. The French entrance into North Africa proved a major disruption in the lifestyle of the Tuareg people and began the

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<sup>121</sup> "Mali, National Democratic Institute," The National Democratic Institute, accessed July 10, 2014, <https://www.ndi.org/mali>.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

Tuareg rebellions that have continued to present day. The arrival of the French brought forth a period of Tuareg dispersion and initiated the process of political marginalization through the creation of a formal state with formal, defined borders. The nomadic lifestyle of the Tuaregs was no longer accepted under French rule as the establishment of colonial rule required a more structured state system. Within the newly constructed borders, the Tuaregs found themselves in the minority compared to other ethnic groups. The establishment of colonial borders influenced the movement of the Tuareg societies towards a fight for land rights and resulted in the first Tuareg Rebellion in the early 1960s against the Malian government.<sup>123</sup>

Once nations began to develop institutions and formal rules of law, the conflict between the Tuareg and nation states deepened. Mali and Niger hesitated to assist the Tuareg areas when severe droughts hit Mali in the 1970s and 1980s. During the droughts of the 1970s and 1980s, many of the Tuareg youth were forced to relocate to Libya and Algeria. The exodus of disenfranchised Tuareg youth to areas with high levels of militarized insurgent actors set the stage for armed conflict against the Malian government in the years to follow. While in Libya, Tuareg youth gained combat skills under the direction of former Libyan leader Muammar Gadhafi, which allowed them to return to Mali and defeat the Malian army.<sup>124</sup>

The severe droughts and famines of the 1970s and 1980s also raised tensions among the Tuareg population concerning the allocation of foreign aid distribution. The resultant of the dispute was the second Tuareg rebellion beginning in 1990. The Malian government reacted quickly and forcefully in an attempt to quell the rebellion. Their actions, however, resulted in multiple ethnic groups entering into the conflict and additional fringe youth being coerced to take up arms. Only after realizing the need for a

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<sup>123</sup> Kalifa Keita, "Conflict and Conflict Resolution in the Sahel: The Tuareg Insurgency in Mali," Strategic Studies Institute, 1998, 8, <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/display.cfm?pubID=200>; Bøås and Torheim, "The Trouble in Mali," 1280–1281.

<sup>124</sup> Bøås and Torheim, "The Trouble in Mali," 1282; Clionadh Raleigh, "Political Marginalization, Climate Change, and Conflict in African Sahel States," *International Studies Review* 12, no.1 (March 2010): 73–74, DOI: 10.1111/j.1468-2486.2009.00913.x.

rapid solution to the problems in the north and the threats the rebellion placed on democratization, did the Malian government sign a temporary peace accord with the Tuareg.<sup>125</sup>

The Tuaregs once again turned to violence against the Malian government in 2006 with a series of attacks aimed towards gaining representation in the region. Mainly attributed to a rebel group named Movement for the National Liberation of Azawad (MNLA), these attacks created unrest throughout Mali. The MNLA was able to utilize increased firepower acquired from the fall of the Libyan regime to drive Malian forces out of northern Mali and declare independence. Ultimately, in 2012, the Tuareg uprising in Mali resulted in a military coup, which left the door open for Al-Qaeda affiliated groups to subsequently take control of northern Mali.<sup>126</sup>

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) attempted to develop a peacekeeping operation in Mali, but because of the swift moving AQIM threat, military intervention had already been identified as the requisite action in Northern Mali. ECOWAS attempted to create a contingency plan for an intervention against AQIM forces in Northern Mali but failed to do so in a timely manner. The initial plan called for an ECOWAS force to deploy into Mali with backup from the international community. ECOWAS was unprepared and under equipped to engage in such a large scale task and the quick movement of AQIM eventually initiated a French response. As AQIM advanced towards Bamako, the French military took action to disrupt AQIM's movement across Mali and left ECOWAS on the sidelines during the initial action.<sup>127</sup>

Chinese officials were concerned with the reconstruction phase of the French intervention and feared it would present similar issues to those witnessed in Libya in which 35,000 Chinese workers were threatened during the instability following NATO

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<sup>125</sup> Benjaminsen, "Does Supply-Induced Scarcity Drive Violent Conflicts in the African Sahel?" *Journal of Peace Research* 45, no. 6 (2008): 829, <http://jpr.sagepub.com/content/45/6/819>.

<sup>126</sup> Bøås and Torheim, "The Trouble in Mali," 1281.

<sup>127</sup> Derek Henry Flood, "A Review of the French-led Military Campaign in Northern Mali," *CTC Sentinel* 6, no. 5 (2013): 5–6, <http://www.ctc.usma.edu/posts/may-2013>.

operations.<sup>128</sup> The increase of militia groups and associated security concerns in Libya following the NATO intervention in 2011 caused China to remain skeptical of an intervention in Mali. Chinese critics of the Libyan intervention point to the nearly 5,000 armed groups present in Libya and the poor humanitarian conditions following the NATO operation.<sup>129</sup> Despite the early misgivings and fears of promoting a neo-colonialist image on the continent, China supported UN efforts to stabilize Northern Mali.

As leading Chinese expert on Africa, He Wenping, discusses, “I think the French military intervention was necessary. It was necessary because the situation was very urgent: militias in the north of Mali were attacking strategic strongholds not far from the capital city of Bamako.”<sup>130</sup> Understanding China’s move from limited support to highly interventionist in Mali begins with first identifying China’s economic interests not only in Mali, but also in the greater Sahel region.

## **B. ECONOMIC INTERESTS**

When AQIM threatened the stability of Mali in 2012, China’s economic interests were threatened not only in Mali itself, but perhaps more importantly in the larger region of the Sahel. The Mali case demonstrates how the rise of insecurity in one nation can potentially threaten China’s regional economic interests and therefore drive China towards intervention. This scenario is especially pertinent to African nations in which large, porous borders mean conflicts generally threaten multiple nations—as witnessed with the movement of rebel groups between DRC and Rwanda.

Understanding China’s actions in Mali to protect its regional economic interests provides possible insight into future Chinese interventions on the African continent. Until African nations are able to possess sufficient national security structures to prevent the

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<sup>128</sup> China in Africa Project, “Leading Africa Expert in China: French Intervention in Mali ‘was Necessary,’” January 30, 2013, <http://www.chinaafricaproject.com/france-china-mali-he-wenping-cass-beijing/>; “The Libyan Dilemma,” *The Economist*, September 10, 2011, <http://www.economist.com/node/21528664>.

<sup>129</sup> Ruan Zongze, “Responsible Protection,” *China US Focus*, March 16, 2012, <http://www.chinausfocus.com/foreign-policy/responsible-protection/>.

<sup>130</sup> China in Africa Project, “Leading Africa Expert in China.”

spread of conflicts among neighboring nations, China's economic interests in one nation will be directly tied to regional security. This section aims to identify China's economic relationship with Mali, along with its greater economic interests in the region, to understand how regional insecurity threatened China's economic interests, which resulted in increased Chinese intervention.

## **1. Mali-China Economic Ties**

Early Sino-Mali economic ties date back to 1960 when China and Mali officially began diplomatic relations. The subsequent years brought various trade negotiations between the two nations including agreements signed in 1961 and 1978.<sup>131</sup> In 1983, a mutual-benefit trade cooperation significantly increased Chinese assistance to Malian infrastructure projects.<sup>132</sup> China's contribution to Mali's infrastructure development in the form of roads, buildings, and bridges continued throughout the 1990s as China's investments in Sub-Saharan African increased.<sup>133</sup>

Chinese President Hu Jintao's visit to Mali in 2009, combined with former Malian President Amadou Toumani Toure's four visits to China from 2004-2010, represent a significant increase in dialogue between the two nations—much of which centered on economic relations.<sup>134</sup>

While on a 2004 visit to China, President Toure vowed to “Increase economic and commercial cooperation between both countries.”<sup>135</sup> True to his words, President Toure's relationship with China led to significant increases in Sino-Mali economic relations. By 2012, China had become Mali's number one export destination (Figure 4) and number four import destination (Figure 5).<sup>136</sup> FDI flow from China to Mali had also increased

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<sup>131</sup> “China-Mali Relations China in Africa,” Sino-Africa.org, June 23, 2011, <http://www.sinoafrica.org/en/node/873>.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

<sup>134</sup> Daouda Cisse, “The Malian Crisis-China's Reaction Capacity at a Test Again?,” Centre for Chinese Studies, April 5, 2012, 1, [http://www.ccs.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/Malian-Crisis-and-its-impacts-on-the-Chinese-presence-Daouda\\_5April2012.pdf](http://www.ccs.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/Malian-Crisis-and-its-impacts-on-the-Chinese-presence-Daouda_5April2012.pdf).

<sup>135</sup> Ibid.

<sup>136</sup> Esterhuyse and Kane, *CCS Policy Briefing*, 3.



dramatically from \$1.2 million in 1999, to \$210 million by 2010.<sup>137</sup> A majority of FDI from China assists in funding various infrastructure development projects to include schools, communications architecture, and construction projects.<sup>138</sup>

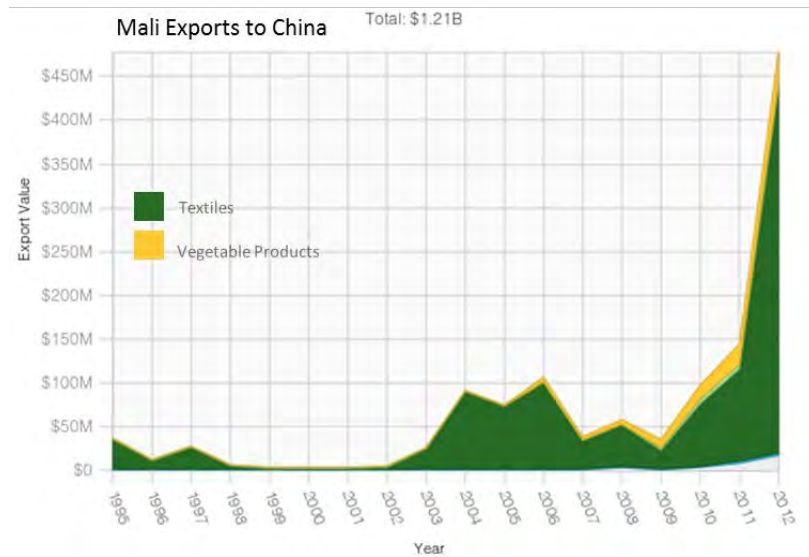


Figure 4. Mali Exports to China<sup>139</sup>

As shown in Figure 4, the majority of Mali’s exports to China consist of agricultural products, of which cotton is the largest. Mali is the third leading producer of cotton in West Africa—a region that accounts for 15 percent of global cotton production.<sup>140</sup> China imported approximately five percent of its cotton from Mali in 2012, which helps fuel the large scale Chinese textile industry.<sup>141</sup>

<sup>137</sup> Karl P. Sauvart, *China: An Emerging FDI Outward Investor*, E-Brief (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, December 4, 2003), 5, [http://unctad.org/sections/dite\\_fdistat/docs/china\\_ebrief\\_en.pdf](http://unctad.org/sections/dite_fdistat/docs/china_ebrief_en.pdf); Cisse, “The Malian Crisis-China’s Reaction Capacity at a Test Again?,” 2.

<sup>138</sup> Cisse, “The Malian Crisis-China’s Reaction Capacity at a Test Again?,” 1–2.

<sup>139</sup> “OEC: Mali (MLI) Profile of Exports, Imports and Trade Partners,” accessed July 10, 2014, <http://atlas.media.mit.edu/profile/country/mli/>.

<sup>140</sup> Mamadou Gaye, *Fair Trade Cotton in Mali*, Growing Inclusive Markets (New York: United Nations Development Programme, 2007), 2, [http://www.africa-platform.org/sites/default/files/resources/mali\\_fair\\_trade\\_cotton.pdf](http://www.africa-platform.org/sites/default/files/resources/mali_fair_trade_cotton.pdf).

<sup>141</sup> “OEC: The Observatory of Economic Complexity,” accessed August 7, 2014, <http://atlas.media.mit.edu/>.

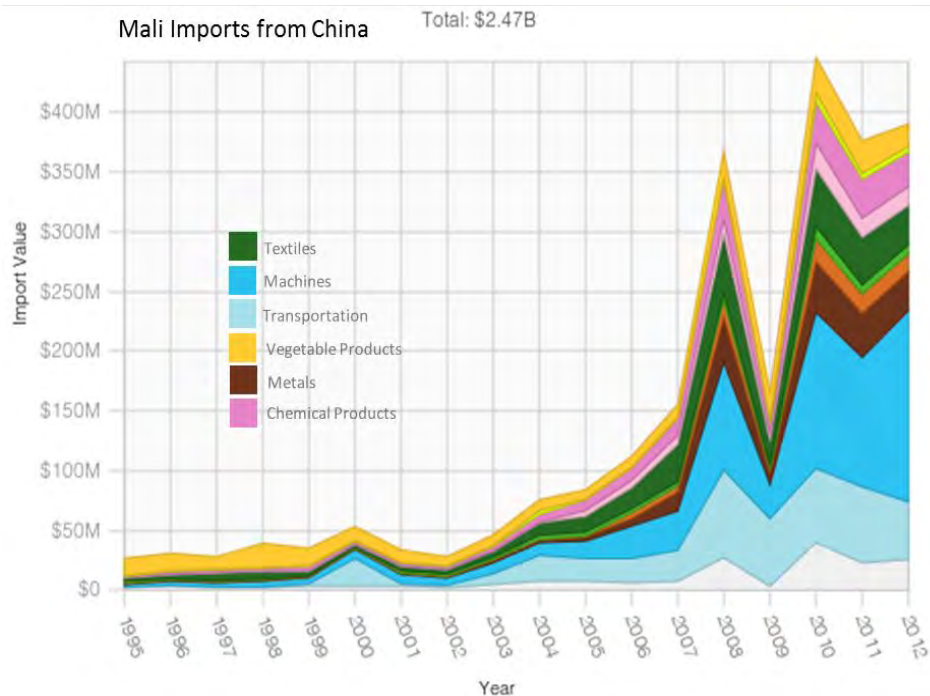


Figure 5. Mail Imports from China<sup>142</sup>

The economic relationship between China and Mali allows each nation to benefit from each other's strengths. Mali receives much-needed infrastructure to assist in its development, while China receives a market for its goods along with agricultural and mineral products. Although the economic connections between Mali and China are important to consider, China's economic interests to intervene in Mali go beyond Mali's borders and arguably center on two distinct concerns: fears of regional instability, and the protection of Chinese citizens and infrastructure abroad.

## 2. Maintaining Regional Stability

China's main economic concern in Mali extended beyond the borders of Mali and instead were focused on the threat an unstable Mali presented to the larger Sahel region. The Sahel region (Figure 6) includes fragile economies with histories of political violence

<sup>142</sup> "OEC: Mali (MLI) Profile of Exports, Imports and Trade Partners."

and irregular weather patterns inducing devastating droughts. The continued dependency on subsistence farming creates severe economic instability throughout the region making external investment opportunities sparse.<sup>143</sup>



Figure 6. Sahel Region<sup>144</sup>

With porous borders throughout the region, instability easily spreads between nations in the Sahel leaving insecurity in one nation a threat to all.<sup>145</sup> China's need to promote regional stability in the Sahel is increasing as its reliance on resources from the region continues to grow.

Mali's neighbor to the east—Niger—began mining uranium in the early 1970s and has recently become the fourth highest producer of uranium worldwide.<sup>146</sup> In

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<sup>143</sup> Andre-Michel Essoungou, "The Sahel: One Region, Many Crises," Africa Renewal Online, December 2013, 22, <http://www.un.org/africarenewal/magazine/december-2013/sahel-one-region-many-crises>.

<sup>144</sup> "West Africa Hunger Crisis," 2012, <http://www.worldvision.ie/ways-to-give/west-africa-hunger-crisis>.

<sup>145</sup> Christopher S. Chivvis and Andrew Liepman, *North Africa's Menace: AQIM's Evolution and the US Policy Response* (DTIC Document, 2013), 4, <http://oai.dtic.mil/oai/oai?verb=getRecord&metadataPrefix=html&identifier=ADA586265>.

<sup>146</sup> "Uranium in Niger," accessed July 11, 2014, <http://www.world-nuclear.org/info/country-profiles/countries-g-n/niger/>.

competition with France, China's investment in Nigerien uranium mines has expanded since 2007 through the China Nuclear International Uranium Corporation (SinoU).<sup>147</sup> SinoU currently holds a majority stake (37.4 percent) in the Societe des Mines d'Azelik SA (SOMINA) mine in northwestern Mali, along with an additional Chinese company—Zhongxing Joy Investment Company (ZXJOY Invest)—with a 24.8 percent stake.<sup>148</sup>

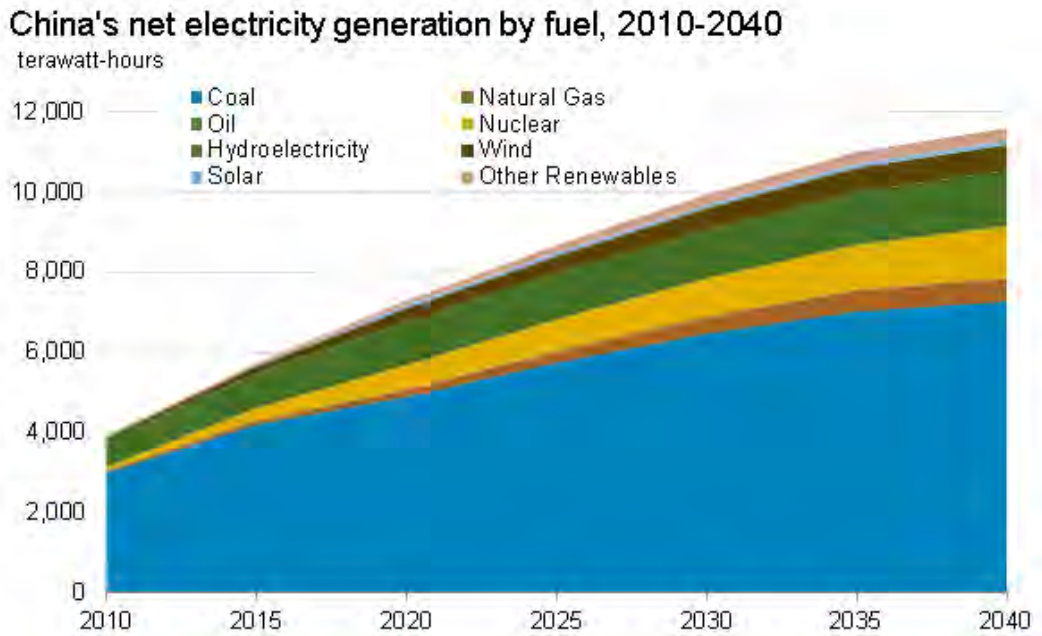


Figure 7. China's Net Electricity Generation by Fuel, 2010–2040<sup>149</sup>

China's domestic sourcing of uranium is unable to match the needs of nuclear power companies within China and therefore has ignited the pursuit for additional resources internationally.<sup>150</sup> China plans to boost its nuclear power capacity from 2.2 GW in 2011 to 58 GW by 2020 (see Figure 7).

<sup>147</sup> Ibid.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid.

<sup>149</sup> U.S. Energy Information Administration, "International Energy Outlook," 2013. <http://www.eia.gov/countries/cab.cfm?fips=CH>.

<sup>150</sup> "China's Nuclear Fuel Cycle," accessed July 11, 2014, <http://www.world-nuclear.org/info/Country-Profiles/Countries-A-F/China--Nuclear-Fuel-Cycle/>.

The growing requirements of Chinese power grids on Nigerian sourced uranium required China to take an active role in assuring the security of its investments abroad.<sup>151</sup> The potentially destabilizing flood of AQIM fighters from Mali into the Sahel threatened China's economic interests thus increasing China's willingness to support of the intervention in Mali. Along with the protection of access to resources, China's need to protect its people and infrastructure is also growing.

### **3. Protecting Chinese Citizens and Infrastructure**

Mali and the Sahel region attract little attention from typical Western markets, but for Chinese investors, the area has proved a viable market for Chinese goods.<sup>152</sup> Chinese-made goods provide a cheaply priced alternative to local markets within Mali and have allowed low income families a higher standard of living.<sup>153</sup> The increase in Chinese exports in Mali has brought with it an increase in Chinese entrepreneurs moving to the region. An estimated 3000 Chinese citizens have moved to Mali in search of economic opportunities.<sup>154</sup> Mali acts as a hub for Chinese businessmen in the region seeking to branch out to other higher paying investment opportunities in neighboring nations.<sup>155</sup> Following China's increased economic footprint in Mali, Chinese-led infrastructure development projects have steadily increased in scope, and size.<sup>156</sup>

Externally-funded infrastructure projects are seldom given without expectation of some form of return on investment—China's funding of Malian infrastructure programs is no exception.<sup>157</sup> Whether through stated obligations to a trading partner or implied,

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<sup>151</sup> Ross Anthony, "The Reluctant Policeman: China, Mali and the Principle of 'non-Interference,'" Centre for Chinese Studies, November 19, 2012, 1, <http://www.ccs.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/RA-Mali.pdf>.

<sup>152</sup> Esterhuyse and Kane, *CCS Policy Briefing*, 2.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid.

<sup>156</sup> Henry Fletcher, *Development Aid for Infrastructure Investment in Africa: Malian Relations with China, the European Commission and the World Bank* (Midrand, South Africa: South African Institute of International Affairs, 2010), 5, <http://www.saiia.org.za/occasional-papers/development-aid-for-infrastructure-investment-in-africa-malian-relations-with-china-the-european-commission-and-the-world-bank>.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid., 9.

Chinese investments generally have underlying expectations for repayment.<sup>158</sup> One of China's most notorious infrastructure investments in Mali took the form of five stadiums to be used during the 2002 Africa Cup of Nations.<sup>159</sup> Annually, China is estimated to give \$296 million to Mali in the form of infrastructure development.<sup>160</sup> Other forms of Chinese infrastructure development in Mali include a bridge in Bamako and various road networks.<sup>161</sup> While Chinese infrastructure improvements likely provide improved capacity to lesser developed nations such as Mali, these improvements predominately benefit Chinese investors in their abilities to pursue investment opportunities.

The increase in Chinese-funded infrastructure projects and higher presence of around 3000 Chinese citizens in Mali has increased China's awareness towards maintaining peace and stability in its trading partners. Improvements in infrastructure allow China to pursue its economic interests more efficiently. Insecurity threatens Chinese infrastructure development projects and raises the operation costs for Chinese investors. China's concern for protecting its infrastructure and people is a key factor towards changing China's foreign policy towards a more interventionist role on the African continent.

#### **4. China's Response to Conflict in Mali**

As events unfolded in Mali, Chinese officials fearfully watched while insecurity threatened the region—potentially harming China's regional economic interests. As Zhong Jianhua, China's special representative for African affairs stated, "The risk of a spillover of insecurity [from Mali] is real."<sup>162</sup> Ambassador Zhong's comments underline China's regional concerns the insecurity in Mali presented to West Africa and the Sahel. Along with Ambassador Zhong's comments, China requested Malian assistance in

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<sup>158</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>162</sup> Johnathan Holslag, "Brussels Institute of Contemporary China Studies—Interview with Zhong Jianhua," Brussels Institute of Contemporary Chinese Studies, November 14, 2012, <http://www.vub.ac.be/biccs/site/index.php?id=272>.

protecting Chinese personnel and interests in Mali. Chinese Foreign minister Spokesman, Hong Lei, described Chinese conversations with the Malian government during a January 2013 news conference, in which China requested Mali's assistance in protecting Chinese citizens during the conflict.<sup>163</sup> The disordered Malian government was unable to assist in the protection of Chinese citizens—leaving China's economic interests in the hands of the international community.

Chinese ambassador to Mali, Cao Zhongming, identified China's growing fear for its economic interests in Mali and the threat to Chinese citizens abroad. Ambassador Cao stated, "Considering the tense situation in northern Mali, we have told Chinese companies in the Segou region which are quite close to the conflict, to withdraw their workers."<sup>164</sup> The instability in Mali placed Chinese personnel and infrastructure at risk, which pressed China to take a more interventionist approach towards Mali. Ambassador Cao also instructed Chinese citizens to cancel any unnecessary travel to Mali. Protecting its people and infrastructure investments in Mali—and throughout the region—became increasingly important for China as the situation in Mali deteriorated.

Following the Chinese requests for Mali to protect its citizens and infrastructure in January 2013, the security situation in Mali remained precarious. While the French-led operation succeeded in dispersing the Islamic terrorist groups threatening Bamako, widespread instability and humanitarian concerns spread across Mali.<sup>165</sup> China announced its decision to supply combat troops to Mali in June 2013 after initial French combat operations had concluded. China's combat troops deployed to Mali were directly tasked with "repairing roads and bridges, safeguarding peace and stability as well as providing medical assistance."<sup>166</sup> China's stated focus on restoring Malian

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<sup>163</sup> "China Asks Malian Government to Protect Nationals' Safety," CCTV News, January 17, 2013, <http://english.cntv.cn/20130117/108128.shtml>.

<sup>164</sup> "Chinese Companies Move from Mali Conflict," CCTV News, January 20, 2013, <http://english.cntv.cn/program/newsupdate/20130120/101218.shtml>.

<sup>165</sup> "Mali-Chronology of Coverage," *The New York Times*, accessed August 26, 2014, <http://topics.nytimes.com/top/news/international/countriesandterritories/mali/index.html>.

<sup>166</sup> "China to Send Peacekeeping Forces to Mali," Xinhua English, July 12, 2013, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2013-07/12/c\\_132537050.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2013-07/12/c_132537050.htm).

infrastructure—which was largely Chinese funded—demonstrated China’s rationale for sending combat troops to protect its economic interests and restore infrastructure—allowing Chinese-Mali trade to recommence.

Chinese scholars also recognized China’s decision to intervene in Mali based on its economic interests. Li Wentao, a researcher from the Institute of African Studies at the China institute of Contemporary International Relations, observed China’s increasing efforts to protect its economic interests in Mali commenting, “The deployment, if true, shows China's willingness to better help Africa address its security concerns and to protect growing economic interests of Chinese investors there.”<sup>167</sup> Li Jian and Jin Jing from China’s Naval Research Institute (concerning the Mali intervention) argue, “We [China] should actively and steadily participate in regional security affairs.”<sup>168</sup> Chinese scholars’ growing acceptance of the need to intervene in Mali assists in identifying the underlying economic motivations behind China’s move away from non-intervention across the African continent.

China’s actions in Mali demonstrate how China’s economic interests shaped its decision to take a more-interventionist role in restoring stability in Mali. Chinese officials directly cited concern for Chinese citizens and interests within Mali, along with fears of “spillover” to surrounding nations. China then called on the Malian government to protect its interests, but Mali, unable to insure the protection of Chinese citizens and infrastructure, left China’s calls for protection unanswered. The inability of the Malian government to protect Chinese interests, resulted in China’s decision to deploy combat troops to restore Chinese-funded infrastructure and assist in protecting Chinese citizens. Along with its economic interests in Mali, pressures from the West also contributed towards shaping China’s actions towards the Mali intervention.

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<sup>167</sup> Zhao Shengnan, “China Offers to Provide Peacekeepers to Mali,” China Daily, May 24, 2013, Online edition, sec. Politics, [http://usa.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2013-05/24/content\\_16526637.htm](http://usa.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2013-05/24/content_16526637.htm).

<sup>168</sup> Li Jian, and Jin Jing, “PRC Military Analysts Say China Shouldn’t Aid Mali. Netizens Disagree, Urging Forceful Protection of National Interests [Translation],” The China Africa Project, January 22, 2013. <http://www.chinaafricaproject.com/prc-military-analysts-say-china-shouldnt-aid-mali-netizens-disagree-urging-forceful-protection-of-national-interests/>.



## C. WESTERN PRESSURES

AQIM's takeover of northern Mali instigated concern from the international community for the potential of a "new Afghanistan" in West Africa.<sup>169</sup> The terrorist organization stood dangerously close to overtaking the disheveled Malian nation and potentially creating a safe haven for terrorist operations throughout Africa. The nature of the terrorist threat faced in Mali created a Western response highlighting the need for intervention to prevent the spread of terrorism. While China had previously argued against intervention in the name of defeating terrorism in other Western-led interventions, China's response to Mali was distinctly more interventionist in nature.

This section aims to establish how Western pressure drove China towards a more interventionist policy in two ways. First, U.S. backed anti-terror sentiments establishing the need for intervening against terrorist threats following 9/11 translated to Chinese foreign policy, and therefore compelled China to take a more active role against the threat of AQIM. Second, if perceived as a "free rider" amongst global powers, China feared it would lose influence in international affairs.<sup>170</sup> China's ability to compete against Western power, meant it must take an active role in efforts to stabilize Mali or risk surrendering power to Western nations.

### 1. Combating Terrorism

In Chinese foreign policy discussions prior to Mali, the U.S. War on Terror post-9/11 had been viewed as a tool aimed towards establishing U.S. global dominance. This all changed, however, after the terrorist expansion in Mali threatened the entire Sahelian region. Chinese criticism of early U.S. anti-terrorism efforts had argued, "Washington has tried to hijack international law, institutions and norms to help cloak the pursuit of narrow US national interests."<sup>171</sup> Unlike previous Chinese criticism of the United States'

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<sup>169</sup> Hussein Solomon, "Mali: West Africa's Afghanistan," *The RUSI Journal* 158, no. 1 (2013): 12, doi:10.1080/03071847.2013.774635.

<sup>170</sup> Yun Sun, "How China Views France's Intervention in Mali: An Analysis," The Brookings Institution, January 23, 2013, <http://www.brookings.edu/research/opinions/2013/01/23-china-france-intervention-mali-sun>.

<sup>171</sup> Denny Roy, "China's Reaction to American Predominance," *Survival* 45, no. 3 (2003): 60, doi:10.1080/0039.2003.10071607.

use of intervention to combat terrorist threats, AQIM's entrance into northern Mali garnered less Chinese pushback than previously witnessed. Chinese scholars began matching Western language to define the need for intervention against the terrorist threat in Mali. As Chinese African expert He Wenping articulated when asked about the differences between interventions in Mali and Côte d'Ivoire (in which China did not provide military support), "Mali is a very specific case that is different from Côte d'Ivoire because the militias based in the north of Mali are not simply opposition rebel forces — they also include terrorist groups."<sup>172</sup> The Chinese identification of a terrorist threat in Mali—particularly when the Tuareg rebellion initiated the insecurity in Mali—mimicked Western actions of placing a greater emphasis on terrorism threats than rebellions in determining when or if to intervene.

China's justification to intervene in Mali under the premise of fighting terrorism allowed it to accomplish its goals of protecting its people and infrastructure, while also considerably reducing Western pressure. In its initial response to Mali, China tried to maintain its tone of non-intervention in the name of protecting sovereignty. As David Shinn identifies, however, the standard Chinese response calling for non-intervention in Mali, gradually shifted to a more direct response presenting China's willingness to support military action.<sup>173</sup>

During the early stages of the French intervention in Mali, China realized the validity of the West's policy of intervening against terrorist threats following the attack at the In Amenas gas facility in Algeria on 16 January 2013. During the attack, Islamic extremists took control of a gas processing facility killing 39 and disrupting Algeria's hydrocarbon production by as much as 10 percent.<sup>174</sup> While no Chinese citizens were killed during the attack, it served as a reminder of the economic and personal security impact of terrorism in the region. China's tone following the attack became increasingly accepting of the need for military intervention in Mali—bringing China closer towards

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<sup>172</sup> China in Africa Project, "Leading Africa Expert in China."

<sup>173</sup> David Shinn, "China's Response to the Islamist Threat in Mali," CHINA US Focus, June 21, 2013, <http://www.chinausfocus.com/peace-security/chinas-response-to-the-islamist-threat-in-mali/>.

<sup>174</sup> "One Year on from In Amenas Attack," *The Economist*, January 14, 2014, <http://www.eiu.com/industry/article/281421212/one-year-on-from-in-amenas-attack/2014-01-14>.

Western standards of intervention in the name of terrorism.<sup>175</sup> Chinese Africa-expert He Wenping shifted from rebuking France's decision to intervene unilaterally in Mali prior to the In Amenas attack to stating, "I think the French military intervention was necessary. . . because the situation was very urgent; militias in the north of Mali were attacking strategic strongholds not far from the capital city of Bamako."<sup>176</sup> The In Amenas crisis reminded China of the direct threat terrorism presented to its interests in Mali, and highlighted China's shifting stance on intervening against terrorist threat—moving closer towards Western standards of intervention.

## **2. Avoiding the "Free Rider" Stigma**

The second way in which Western pressure increased China's willingness to support military intervention in Mali is found in its interest to avoid the "free rider" designation by Western nations. As China continues to grow as a world power, it has begun to desire to generate a positive image in the international community to reduce the threat of US and Western pressure.<sup>177</sup> In the case of Mali, Western pressure behind intervention influenced China to vote in favor of the intervention to avoid negative repercussions from the international community associated with abstaining. Chinese Scholar Yun Sun articulates China's position in Mali by stating, "[The Mali intervention] has raised wide-speculation in the West that China is "free-riding" again in a West-led mission to stabilize a country infested with terrorist threats...China strongly opposes being described as a 'free-rider.'"<sup>178</sup> In February 2013, Chinese Vice Foreign Minister, Song Tao, also articulated a desire to avoid the "free rider" label when he discussed China's contribution to resolving conflicts, stating, "Emerging economies are not free riders...as they continue to grow, emerging economies will take a more active part in international affairs to promote international cooperation and tackle global

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<sup>175</sup> Shinn, "China's Response to the Islamist Threat in Mali."

<sup>176</sup> Ibid.

<sup>177</sup> Robert G Sutter, *Chinese Foreign Relations: Power and Policy since the Cold War* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2012), 5–6.

<sup>178</sup> Sun, "How China Views France's Intervention in Mali."

challenges.”<sup>179</sup> To increase its own standing in the international community and play a more pronounced role in the affairs of the African continent, China chose to avoid Western pressure and support the military intervention in Mali.

The Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) received 135 Chinese peacekeepers initially in 2013, increasing to 235 the following year.<sup>180</sup> China’s vote in favor of the intervention in Mali displayed China’s increased propensity towards voting in support of military intervention forces. During previous UN votes on military intervention, China had utilized a strategy of abstaining from voting on specific UN issues to allow it to maintain a line between upholding its own foreign policy objectives, and managing tension between allied Western nations.<sup>181</sup> Abstaining from voting on issues in which Chinese and Western norms clash allowed China to reduce negative backlash that would likely ensue should it pursue the veto option.

Chinese scholars defended against apparent Western criticism calling China a “free rider” in Mali. China began a concerted effort to prove to the world it was a responsible member of the international community and dedicated to achieving stability in Mali.<sup>182</sup> The Chinese Vice Foreign minister’s comments in February 2013 defending China, followed France’s entrance into Northern Mali and continued Western criticisms of China’s “free rider” actions in global affairs.<sup>183</sup> Western critique of China’s actions cited China’s limited role in assisting in Afghanistan despite being under a UN mandate, and the potential Mali would be another Western-led intervention with limited Chinese

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<sup>179</sup> “Emerging Economies Not Free Riders: Chinese Vice FM,” CCTV News, February 2, 2013, <http://english.cntv.cn/20130202/105006.shtml>.

<sup>180</sup> Esterhuyse and Kane, *CCS Policy Briefing*, 3.

<sup>181</sup> Yitzhak Shichor, “China’s Voting Behavior in the U.N. Security Council,” Association for Asian Research, October 31, 2006, <http://www.asianresearch.org/articles/2947.html>.

<sup>182</sup> Sun, “How China Views France’s Intervention in Mali.”

<sup>183</sup> Monish Gulati, “Chinese Troops in Mali: Strategic Change in Foreign Policy?,” *South Asia Monitor*, July 5, 2013, <http://southasiamonitor.org/detail.php?type=sl&nid=5312>.

support.<sup>184</sup> China reacted to Western pressure with announcements of increased peacekeeping support to Mali, and ultimately, the deployment of combat troops.<sup>185</sup>

China's adherence to Western pressure allowed it to take a more active role in the affairs of the African continent—boosting its image across the continent as a suitable contender against Western dominance. China's decision to increase its peacekeeping support directly followed Western pressure questioning if China would remain a “free rider” while Western nations were left to address the terrorism threat in Northern Mali. China's participation in the Mali peacekeeping efforts is indicative of a larger scale Chinese move to promote its image in the international community as a responsible world power.<sup>186</sup> Supporting the Western norm of intervention in the name of combating terrorism allowed China to avoid criticism from the West to appear as a responsible actor in global politics.<sup>187</sup>

In its official statements and deployment of combat troops, China demonstrated a highly interventionist approach towards resolving a security threat in relation to its typical stance on non-intervention. When confronted with the Western norm of intervention, China made a calculated decision to support efforts in Mali to reduce criticism from the West, but also from African nations.

#### **D. AFRICAN PRESSURES**

Under China's declared non-intervention policy, international intervention is acceptable if a nation in need formally requests assistance.<sup>188</sup> During the Mali crisis, Mali's interim President, Dioncounda Traore, petitioned the Economic Community of

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<sup>184</sup> Ibid.

<sup>185</sup> “China Offers 500 Troops to UN Mali Force,” *South China Morning Post*, May 23, 2013, <http://www.scmp.com/news/china/article/1244305/china-offers-500-troops-un-mali-force>.

<sup>186</sup> Craig Murray, “China to Deploy “Security Force” to UN Peacekeeping Operation in Mali,” *Backgrounder*, US-China Economic and Security Review Commission, July 9, 2013, 3, [http://origin.www.uscc.gov/sites/default/files/Research/Backgrounder\\_China%20to%20Deply%20Security%20Force%20to%20UN%20Peacekeeping%20Operation%20in%20Mali\\_0.pdf](http://origin.www.uscc.gov/sites/default/files/Research/Backgrounder_China%20to%20Deply%20Security%20Force%20to%20UN%20Peacekeeping%20Operation%20in%20Mali_0.pdf).

<sup>187</sup> Ibid.

<sup>188</sup> Allen Carlson, “More Than Just Saying No: China's Evolving Approach to Sovereignty and Intervention Since Tiananmen,” in *New Directions in the Study of China's Foreign Policy*, ed. Alastair Iain Johnston and Robert S. Ross (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), 217.

West African States (ECOWAS) for assistance in halting the quickly moving terrorist movement in the north.<sup>189</sup> ECOWAS, aware of its lack of resources and expertise required to deploy to Mali, called on the UN for assistance—petitioning to the UN core countries to participate in resolving the conflict.<sup>190</sup> The direct requests for assistance—from both the Malian President and ECOWAS—prompted international support through the UN.

This section will detail the role African pressure had in shaping China’s decision to intervene militarily in Mali. Specifically, this section aims to identify how Mali’s request for intervention, combined with the pressure from regional and sub-regional organizations, encouraged China to participate in Mali. China’s intervention policy identifies the acceptability for intervention when a nation requests assistance. Abstaining when a nation directly requests assistance from China threatens to tarnish China’s stated mutual-benefit relationship with African nations. China’s increased presence in Africa presents the likelihood African nations will call upon it to assist in intervening—pushing China into a more interventionist policy towards the continent.

### **1. Malian Government’s Request for Assistance**

With the threat of Islamic terrorists bearing down on Bamako, the interim Malian government turned to the international community for support. President Traore contacted ECOWAS in early September 2012 and requested military forces to re-establish security in the North.<sup>191</sup> The formal request from Mali sought assistance in, “the securitization of institutions, the reinforcement of the state’s capacity to adequately fight terror groups, the reorganization of the army, and the restoration of Mali’s territorial

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<sup>189</sup> “Mali Requests Military Assistance to Free North: France,” Reuters, September 5, 2012, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/09/05/us-mali-ecowas-troops-idUSBRE88403120120905>.

<sup>190</sup> “African Leaders Urge UN Intervention in Mali,” Al Jazeera, June 8, 2012, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2012/06/20126805111707115.html>; “ECOWAS Seeks UN Support in Resolving Mali Crisis,” ReliefWeb, June 18, 2012, <http://reliefweb.int/report/mali/ecowas-seeks-un-support-resolving-mali-crisis>.

<sup>191</sup> “Mali Requests Military Assistance to Free North.”

integrity.”<sup>192</sup> The request was well beyond the capabilities and resources of ECOWAS, which turned to the UN for assistance in restoring peace and stability to Mali.

The Malian request for assistance highlighted the need to reestablish its territorial integrity—speaking directly to China’s strong sense of maintaining national sovereignty. China held little reason to maintain a non-intervention approach towards Mali when two main requirements of its acceptance of intervention—request from a nation and protecting sovereignty—were met under Mali’s request for assistance. President Traore’s petition for international support required China to act under its own intervention doctrine or face increased pressure from African nations weary of China’s intentions as a mutual-beneficial partner on the continent.

## **2. Regional and Sub-Regional Organizations**

African regional and sub-regional organizations aim to provide African nations a mechanism for resolving issues on the African continent—especially during times of perceived inaction from the international community.<sup>193</sup> Early ECOWAS efforts in Liberia and Sierra Leone aimed to promote regional stability through African-led initiatives, but faced severe budgetary and organizational issues.<sup>194</sup> While these issues remained in place when ECOWAS declared its intentions to intervene in Mali, awareness of the shortfalls prompted ECOWAS to seek out the international community for assistance.<sup>195</sup> Both the AU and ECOWAS petitioned for a UN Chapter VII mandate in response to the speedy advance of rebel and terrorist fighters in Northern Mali.<sup>196</sup>

During the Mali crisis, head of ECOWAS, President Ouedraogo, summoned the assistance of the international community stating, “The success of the regional initiative on Mali will urgently require the involvement of the entire International Community

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<sup>192</sup> “Will the Interim President’s Formal Request to ECOWAS Unlock the Stalemate in Mali,” Institute for Security Studies Africa, September 6, 2012, <http://www.issafrica.org/futures/news/will-the-interim-presidents-formal-request-to-ecowas-unlock-the-stalemate-in-mali>.

<sup>193</sup> Peter Arthur, “ECOWAS and Regional Peacekeeping Integration in West Africa: Lessons for the Future,” *Africa Today* 57, no. 2 (2010): 11.

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>195</sup> “African Leaders Urge UN Intervention in Mali.”

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*

beginning with the Resolution of the Security Council, and the collaboration between ECOWAS, the African Union (AU), UN core countries and other development partners.”<sup>197</sup> In addressing the need for both UN core nation participation and main development partner participation, President Ouedraogo targeted Chinese intervention assistance in Mali. As previously mentioned, China had been considered one of Mali’s closest development partners leading up to the crisis. Even more specifically, Toga McIntosh, the Vice President of ECOWAS, directly requested China’s support in Mali during a May 2013 meeting speaking with Chinese officials stating, “We will continue to count on your brotherly support for the stability of the country [Mali].”<sup>198</sup> The direct request for China’s assistance in Mali elicited an increased Chinese response to peacekeeping efforts in Mali.

### **3. China’s Response to Requests from Mali**

A week after the direct request from ECOWAS for assistance in Mali, China announced its efforts to step up support of UN Resolution 2085 and 2100—calling for the establishment of UN peacekeeping forces in Mali—during a press conference.<sup>199</sup> The Chinese response to African pressure included emphasizing China’s role in restoring Malian infrastructure to assist in the addressing underlying causes of conflict in Mali.<sup>200</sup>

Chinese peacekeeping troops also increased in number following the direct requests for assistance from ECOWAS. Only a week after ECOWAS requested Chinese assistance, Chinese diplomats announced China would be increasing its peacekeeping contribution to 500 soldiers in Mali.<sup>201</sup> The decision for China to increase its peacekeeping forces demonstrated the role African pressure compelled China to intervene.

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<sup>197</sup> “ECOWAS Seeks UN Support in Resolving Mali Crisis.”

<sup>198</sup> “ECOWAS Urges More Chinese Support for Mali,” Economic Community of West African States, May 18, 2013, <http://allafrica.com/stories/201305272238.html>.

<sup>199</sup> Shengnan, “China Offers to Provide Peacekeepers to Mali.”

<sup>200</sup> “ECOWAS Urges More Chinese Support for Mali.”

<sup>201</sup> “China Offers 500 Troops to UN Mali Force.”



With Chinese foreign policy preferring to act through international institutions, African regional and sub-regional organizations are more likely to wield a stronger influence than those of Western backed initiatives. Requests from regional and sub-regional organizations provided China the motivation it needed to support intervention. In the case of Mali, Western pressure alone would likely have been insufficient to garner Chinese support of intervention. With the requests for assistance from ECOWAS, Mali, and the AU, however, Beijing was able to rationalize its support of the international intervention in Mali.

The evolving role of regional and sub-regional organizations offer a unified voice for African nations to petition China towards a more active role in maintaining stability across the continent. The Mali case demonstrates how the petitions from ECOWAS and the Malian government for assistance made China's decision to intervene easier. ECOWAS and Mali both requested assistance based on restoring sovereignty and stability to Northern Mali—a request that matched China's intervention strategy.<sup>202</sup> The direct requests for assistance meant China could intervene without being perceived as acting unilaterally—which made Chinese intervention acceptable in Mali. China's increase in troops following the requests from Mali and ECOWAS serve as evidence that when assistance was requested, China's decision to intervene became easier, and therefore China became more willing to increase its support. As China's relationship with African nations continues to grow, expectations for China to act responsibly in assisting with security threats to African nations will continue to increase.

## **E. CONCLUSION**

While still a relatively new and volatile situation, the Mali intervention offers telling insight into not only the changing shape of Chinese foreign policy on the African continent, but also the drivers associated with such change. A conflict that began as a

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<sup>202</sup> “ECOWAS Urges More Chinese Support for Mali.”

seemingly isolated dispute, evolved into a complex struggle threatening regional security. Without the intervention efforts of the international community, Mali held the potential to morph into a “new Afghanistan.”<sup>203</sup>

Economic interests, Western pressure, and African pressure combined to compel China’s support for intervention in Mali—to the extent of even providing combat troops for the first time in its modern peacekeeping history.<sup>204</sup> Spillover from the insecurity in Mali threatened to disrupt Chinese economic interests in the region and potentially institute domestic repercussions in China. China’s initial admission of its concerns for the protection of Chinese personnel and infrastructure in Mali—along with its subsequent deployment of combat troops to assist in restoring its infrastructure projects displayed China’s economic motivations for intervention in Mali.

Western pressure—through the Western predisposition to combat terrorism—placed China in a position where abstaining from UN voting would damage China’s international image and increase its difficulty in achieving its policy objectives. China directly stated its terrorism concerns in Mali—despite the underlying Tuareg rebellion concerns—which displayed China’s acceptance of Western norms in treating terrorist threats more seriously than rebellion groups. Events such as the In Amenas hostage crisis, offered a tangible example to China of the destructive nature of terrorism in the region—which channeled Chinese support towards Anti-terror efforts in step with Western-backed norms. Western critique of China potentially acting as a “free rider” resulted in China taking a more active role in Mali to protect China’s image in the international community.

Combined with African pressures directed from the Malian government itself, along with regional and sub-regional organizations such as ECOWAS, Chinese foreign policy evolved to allow an increasingly interventionist Chinese role in Mali. China’s “mutually-beneficial” relationship with African nations requires China to maintain a positive image across the continent.

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<sup>203</sup> Solomon, “Mali,” 12.

<sup>204</sup> Esterhuyse and Kane, *CCS Policy Briefing*, 2.

When African nations requested assistance, China's decision to intervene became easier, and increases the frequency in which China will intervene. Had China decided to abstain from assisting Mali, China's credibility with other "mutually-beneficial" nations would have suffered—reducing China's overall image on the continent. The 2011 NATO intervention left China concerned of similar instability in Mali post-intervention.<sup>205</sup> To decrease the threat to its interests in Mali and avoid the post-intervention insecurity witnessed in Libya, China chose to take a more interventionist approach towards reconciliation in Mali and deploy peacekeeping combat troops. The direct requests from ECOWAS and Mali, also placed China in a position where non-intervention would detract from China's long-standing relationship with Mali—and potentially other African nations.

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<sup>205</sup> Sun, "How China Views France's Intervention in Mali."

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#### IV. SUDAN AND SOUTH SUDAN

In perhaps one of the most well-known cases of China's struggle between non-intervention and maintaining its interests, China's interactions with Sudan marked a pivotal juncture in Chinese foreign policy towards the African continent. Until 2007, China had remained dedicated to its staunch policy of non-intervention toward Sudan. President Hu Jintao's 2007 visit with Sudanese officials in Khartoum, however, signaled a distinct shift away from China's previous non-intervention policy. In an attempt to resolve the conflict in Darfur, the Chinese President met with Sudanese leadership to convince them of the need for peacekeepers in the Darfur region.<sup>206</sup> Along with the Chinese President's direct mediation, China contributed a substantial peacekeeping force and voted in support of UN resolution 1769 authorizing the deployment of a hybrid peacekeeping force to Darfur. On the spectrum of intervention defined earlier in this thesis, China's actions demonstrated a highly interventionist stance in Sudan.

China's non-intervention policy once again faced a dilemma in Sudan in 2011 and 2013. Following the secession of South Sudan from Sudan in 2011, trade disputes between the two nations disrupted oil flow from Chinese oil fields and compelled China to take a pronounced role in mediation. Two years later, China's oil interests were threatened again when an ethnic conflict erupted in South Sudan—threatening Chinese infrastructure and energy imports. During each crisis in Sudan, China gradually increased its interventionist efforts to resolve the crisis—moving from reluctance to intervene in Darfur prior to 2007, to a highly interventionist and pro-active approach during South Sudan's conflicts in 2011 and 2013.

The remainder of this chapter seeks to identify how economic interests, Western pressure, and African pressures altered China's non-intervention strategy towards Sudan during the Darfur crisis in 2007, and how post-2007, China enacted its new interventionist role in South Sudanese conflicts in 2011 and 2013. Studying China's

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<sup>206</sup> Ian Taylor, *China's New Role in Africa* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2009), 50.

actions pre and post-2007 identifies China's foreign policy evolution from a low interventionism, to high interventionism in the region.

In analyzing the Chinese shift in Sudan, this chapter will first discuss China's economic ties with both nations—mainly through oil exports— and how as ties substantially increased over the last decade, China grew more dependent on stability in the region. Second, this chapter will analyze the influence of Western pressure from the U.S. and human rights organizations during Darfur—arguing that as the West threatened China's international image, China changed its posture towards Khartoum to reduce Western pressure. Also, Western pressure from the Darfur crisis in 2007, carried over to shape China's actions in South Sudan in 2011 and 2013—therefore prompting China to pro-actively engage in mediation with limited Western pressure required. Third, as requests from the African continent for Chinese assistance to intervene in each dispute increased, China took a more interventionist role in the domestic affairs of each nation to protect its image as a mutually-beneficial partner African nations.

#### **A. CHINA-SUDAN BACKGROUND**

China's early relationship with Sudan had begun in 1959 under the promise of non-intervention and mutual benefit.<sup>207</sup> The long history between the two nations spans Sudanese civil wars in 1972 and 1983, along with the conflict in Darfur beginning in 2003 and South Sudan's secession in 2011.<sup>208</sup> Prior to 2007, China maintained its non-interference policy towards Sudan, supporting each new government with little regard for the domestic actions of Sudan. Following the military coup in 1989, the National Islamic Front took power in Sudan.<sup>209</sup> China participated in a \$300 million arms sale to Khartoum in 1991, and in 1994 was rewarded with a Sudanese request for assistance in developing Sudan's oil fields.<sup>210</sup>

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<sup>207</sup> Daniel Large, "China and the Contradictions of 'Non-Interference' in Sudan," *Review of African Political Economy* 35, no. 115 (2008): 93, doi:10.1080/03056240802011568.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid., 94.

<sup>209</sup> Ibid., 95.

<sup>210</sup> Ibid.

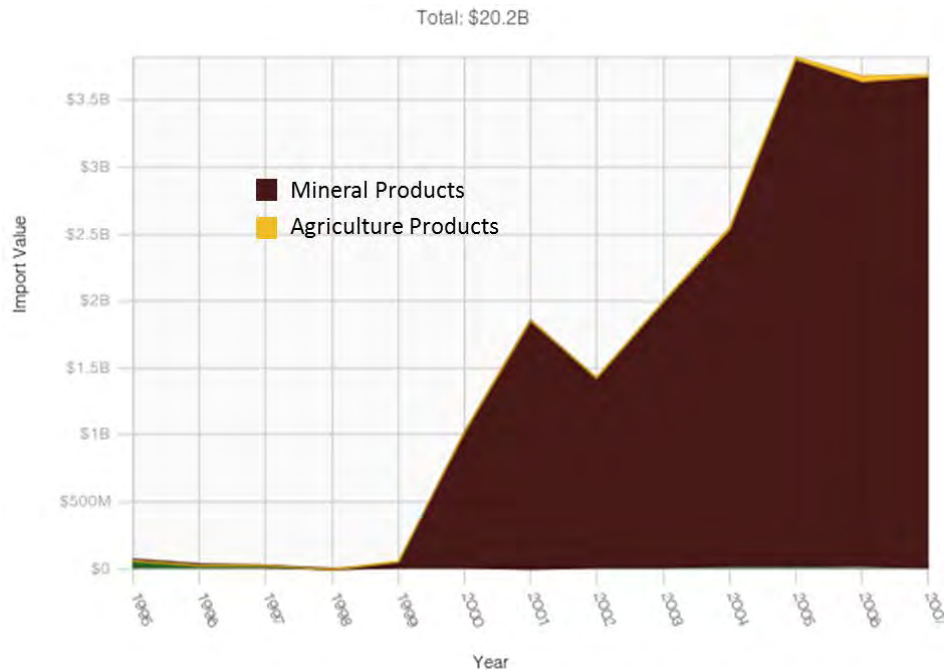


Figure 8. Chinese Import from Sudan<sup>211</sup>

While 2007 highlighted China's major shift in foreign policy towards Sudan, China's changing relationship with Sudan began brewing following the establishment of Sudan-China oil exports in the mid-1990s.<sup>212</sup> China was unable to continue a purely economic relationship with Sudan, as political tensions with the West rose when Sudan was declared a state sponsor of terrorism in 1993.<sup>213</sup> The UN Security Council placed sanctions on Khartoum in 1996 and 1997 following its attempt to assassinate the Egyptian President. Throughout this time period, however, China continued oil exploration and proved to be a much needed ally for Sudan during diplomatic isolation from the international community.<sup>214</sup> China's ability to disregard criticism from the West slowly became more difficult as China emerged as a global leader in the early 2000s and expectations for its responsible behavior on the African continent grew.

<sup>211</sup> The Observatory of Economic Complexity. OECh<http://atlas.media.mit.edu/explore/stacked/hs/import/chn/sdn/show/1995.2007/>.

<sup>212</sup> Ibid., 94.

<sup>213</sup> Ibid., 96.

<sup>214</sup> Ibid., 96.

China's movement from "benevolent benefactor" to "reluctant mediator" came with political responsibilities never before addressed in Chinese foreign policy on the African continent. China's role as a "benevolent benefactor" focused specifically on economic engagement and aimed to avoid meddling in political affairs. China became a 'reluctant mediator' when it realized it could no longer avoid the political ties between its economic interests and the domestic affairs of Sudan—a shift that occurred in 2007. The end of the 1990s brought increased Chinese infrastructure development in Sudan, along with an increase in Sudanese oil exports to China (Figure 8). The ability of China to remain strictly a business partner with Sudan slowly began to fade as China's economic interests in Sudan skyrocketed.

### **1. Darfur**

The beginning of the Darfur crisis in 2003 introduced China to the difficulties associated with maintaining purely economic ties with politically unstable nations. The devastating clash between the Sudanese government and rebel groups from the Darfur region resulted in wide-spread human rights violations and genocidal killing. At the onset of violence in 2003, China offered little assistance in seeking a solution to the conflict, and in 2005 commented "business is business" concerning the deteriorating situation.<sup>215</sup>

With over 3.5 Million people displaced and estimates of over 200,000 killed, Khartoum's deadly crackdown on rebel groups in Western Sudan initiated severe criticism from most of the international community.<sup>216</sup> China, however, remained uncommitted to UN efforts to establish a resolution against the Khartoum government. China debated against any increase in Western sanctions against Sudan—arguing sanctions would only exacerbate the conflict.<sup>217</sup> Ian Taylor describes China's efforts to

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<sup>215</sup> Jonathan Holslag\*, "China's Diplomatic Maneuvering on the Question of Darfur," *Journal of Contemporary China* 17, no. 54 (February 2008): 72, doi:10.1080/10670560701693088.

<sup>216</sup> Taylor, *China's New Role in Africa*, 52.

<sup>217</sup> Joel Wuthnow, *Chinese Diplomacy and the UN Security Council: Beyond the Veto* (Routledge, 2013), 98.



resist UN actions through “abstaining, weakening resolutions, and announcing informally that it would use its veto right if necessary to protect China’s interests in Sudan.”<sup>218</sup>

Western criticism of China’s actions in Sudan threatened to detract from its hosting of the 2008 Olympics in Beijing. China hoped the 2008 Olympics would highlight its success story from poverty to global power. When Western criticism began to spread concerning China’s handling of the Darfur crisis, China’s reputation was threatened and attention diverted from its success story. The labeling of the Beijing Olympics as the “Genocide Olympics” hurt China’s international reputation and led Chinese officials to engage in restoring the Chinese national image.<sup>219</sup> Through its media organizations, China began boasting of its constructive role in mediation efforts in Sudan in an attempt to repair its image.<sup>220</sup>

In combination with Western criticism over the Olympics, US policymakers voiced dissatisfaction with China’s actions in Darfur. Ninety-six US Senators and 108 house members sent a letter to President Hu Jintao in April 2007 condemning China’s actions in Darfur.<sup>221</sup> The actions of U.S. policymakers and critics of the Beijing Olympics were part of a greater U.S. movement aimed towards pushing for China’s acceptance of harsher sanctions against Sudanese leadership.<sup>222</sup> In response to Western pressure, China dispatched Ambassador Liu Guijin in May 2007 to take the lead mediator role in Sudan and assist in reducing tensions in Darfur.<sup>223</sup> China’s move towards mediation highlights a significant shift away from non-intervention in reaction to Western pressure.

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<sup>218</sup> Taylor, *China’s New Role in Africa*, 52.

<sup>219</sup> Ibid., 52–53.

<sup>220</sup> Ibid., 53.

<sup>221</sup> Kerry Dumbaugh, “China-U.S. Relations in the 110th Congress: Issues and Implications for U.S. Policy” (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2009), 53, <http://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RL33877.pdf>.

<sup>222</sup> Wuthnow, *Chinese Diplomacy and the UN Security Council*, 108.

<sup>223</sup> Taylor, *China’s New Role in Africa*, 53.

President Hu Jintao himself visited Khartoum in early 2007, delivering a speech calling for increased efforts to resolve the conflict in Darfur.<sup>224</sup> President Hu Jintao proposed a four point proposal designed to resolve the conflict in Sudan and expressed its “deep concern” towards events in Darfur. China’s lead role in the implementation of a peace plan for Darfur utilized its strong political ties with Khartoum to provide influence not available to Western nations.<sup>225</sup> The Chinese mediation efforts resulted in the Sudanese leadership’s acceptance of UN peacekeepers into the conflict and ultimately an end to the genocide.<sup>226</sup>

Following the U.S. condemnation of China’s actions in Sudan and the anti-Beijing Olympics campaign, China signed UN resolution 1769 on July 31, 2007. The UN resolution authorized the deployment of an African Union (AU)-UN hybrid peacekeeping mission to Darfur to support peace negotiations.<sup>227</sup> China’s UN representative, Wang Guangya, commented on his decision to vote in favor of the resolution stating, “It should be particularly emphasized that the purpose of this Resolution is to authorize the launch of the Hybrid Operation, rather than exert pressure or impose sanctions.”<sup>228</sup> Representative Wang’s comments highlighted China’s attempt to remain in good favor with the Khartoum government, while also accepting Western pressure.

The events in Darfur highlight the significant role Western pressure can have on China’s foreign policy decisions on the African continent. The West inflicted severe reputation costs on China, which caused it to increase its efforts towards mediation in Sudan despite forcing China to act outside its typical non-intervention approach. Previously to Darfur, China had managed to maintain non-intervention and ignore criticism from the West. As China’s stature in global politics grew, however, Western

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<sup>224</sup> Ibid., 55.

<sup>225</sup> Ian Whytock, “How South Sudan Is Challenging China’s Foreign Policy,” NATO Council of Canada, March 18, 2014, <http://natocouncil.ca/how-south-sudan-is-challenging-chinas-foreign-policy/>.

<sup>226</sup> Large, “China and the Contradictions of ‘Non-Interference’ in Sudan,” 100.

<sup>227</sup> *Security Council Authorizes Deployment of United Nations-African Union “Hybrid” Peace Operation in Bid to Resolve Darfur Conflict*, United Nations Security Council Meeting (New York: United Nations, July 31, 2007), <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2007/sc9089.doc.htm>.

<sup>228</sup> Ibid.

pressure became a direct threat to China's national image as a success story in the developing world, and therefore pressed China to act more responsibly in Sudan. Post-Darfur, China realized the power of Western pressure in creating an international environment that burdens China's growth and decreases in international reputation. Alternatively, China realized the strength of its position in mediating conflict in African nations—especially in nations reluctant to work with the West. The lessons from Darfur likely assisted in shaping China's decision-making process regarding the conflict in South Sudan in 2014.

## **B. ECONOMIC INTERESTS**

China's quest for energy imports across the African continent opened a new chapter in its relationship with Sudan, and later South Sudan.<sup>229</sup> Understanding the nature of China's economic interests in Sudan assists in identifying the influence of economic interests in shaping China's decision to intervene in Sudanese conflicts post-2007. This section aims to discuss how China's extensive infrastructure projects in Sudan and South Sudan encouraged China to protect its economic interests, and therefore take a highly interventionist role in Sudanese conflicts post-2007.

### **1. Chinese Infrastructure Investment in Sudan**

Sudan's status as the third leading oil producing nation in Africa garnered China's interest leading to expansive efforts of Chinese companies to gain access to the Sudanese oil fields.<sup>230</sup> China's oil production in Sudan began in 1996 following a Canadian owned energy company's sell of Sudanese oil rights to the Greater Nile Petroleum Operating Company (GNPOC).<sup>231</sup> The China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) initially held a 40 percent stake in GNPOC, but by 1997 became the majority shareholder.<sup>232</sup> China's oil ties to Sudan were firmly planted and Chinese infrastructure investment soon followed.

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<sup>229</sup> Large, "China and the Contradictions of 'Non-Interference' in Sudan," 95.

<sup>230</sup> Taylor, *China's New Role in Africa*, 50.

<sup>231</sup> Ibid.

<sup>232</sup> Ibid., 50–51.

Early Chinese recognition of the need for infrastructure development in Sudan began in the late 1990s as China looked to improve its efficiency in the oil extraction process.<sup>233</sup> Early infrastructure development projects focused on improving Sudan's overall transport capabilities to promote access to desolate regions in southern Sudan. China assisted in building airfields, reinforcing roads, and building oil production facilities throughout the country.<sup>234</sup> China also notably contributed towards building and operating the Greater Nile Oil Pipeline—a 1,600km pipeline that flows from what is now South Sudan, to Port Sudan on the Red Sea (Figure 9).<sup>235</sup>



Figure 9. Greater Nile Oil Pipeline<sup>236</sup>

The pipeline was instrumental in increasing the efficiency of oil transportation from the remote oil fields in southern Sudan. Later Chinese projects aimed to develop Sudan's power grid, and included the building of the El Gaili Combined Cycle Power

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<sup>233</sup> Large, "China and the Contradictions of 'Non-Interference' in Sudan," 96.

<sup>234</sup> Ibid., 96.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid.

<sup>236</sup> Sarah E. Sitarek, "The Civil War in Sudan: The Human Price of Oil," American University Washington, May 9, 2001, <http://www1.american.edu/ted/ice/sudansanctions.htm>.

Plant and the Qarre I thermal station in 2001 and 2002.<sup>237</sup> Once the El Gaili power plant became operational in 2004, its output accounted for one third of all Sudanese power generation.<sup>238</sup> According to Chinese news organizations, Sudan gave high praise to the Chinese-built power plants and quoted locals referring to Chinese workers as “Bringers of light.”<sup>239</sup>

China also assisted in financing the controversial Merowe Dam project beginning construction in 2004 and boasting 1,250 MW of power towards improving the access to electricity in Sudan.<sup>240</sup> Controversy surrounding the dam began after 50,000 farmers were displaced and the Sudanese government harshly dealt with locals willing to voice concern.<sup>241</sup>

Sudan demonstrates the association between high Chinese investment in natural resources and hefty Chinese infrastructure investment—largely because of China’s need for sound infrastructure to reduce its operating costs.<sup>242</sup> When China provides basic infrastructure to less-developed nations, governments in return provide China access to valuable natural resources to assist in sustaining China’s domestic growth. Chinese-backed infrastructure development projects in Sudan mirror similar Chinese projects across the continent aimed towards achieving mutual benefit trade relations using the so called “Angola model.”<sup>243</sup>

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<sup>237</sup> Vivien Foster, William Butterfield, and Chuan Chen, *Building Bridges: China’s Growing Role as Infrastructure Financier for Africa* (New York: The World Bank, 2009), 28, <http://elibrary.worldbank.org/doi/book/10.1596/978-0-8213-7554-9>.

<sup>238</sup> “Sudan Oil Minister Says Energy Cooperation with China Fruitful,” *Sudan Tribune*, July 15, 2007, Online edition, <http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article22865>.

<sup>239</sup> Ibid.

<sup>240</sup> Foster, Butterfield, and Chen, “*Building Bridges*,” 28; Adrian Kriesch “Controversial Sudanese Dam Sparks Human Rights Complaint,” MSN Arabia, May 19, 2010, <http://arabia.msn.com/news/technology/technology-around-web/16772/controversial-sudanese-dam-sparks-hum/>

<sup>241</sup> Ali K Askouri, “The Merowe Dam: Controversy and Displacement in Sudan,” *Forced Migration Review* 21 (September 2004): 56–57.

<sup>242</sup> Foster, Butterfield, and Chen, “*Building Bridges*,” 47.

<sup>243</sup> Ibid., 55.

Based on the premise of trading infrastructure development for access to natural resources, the “Angola model” offers struggling African nations a chance to gain valuable infrastructure development without the need for large sums of capital up front.<sup>244</sup> The “Angola model” avoids direct transfer of funds between nations, and instead issues Chinese construction companies contracts in exchange for natural resource extraction rights.<sup>245</sup>

Working through the China Export-Import (Ex-Im) Bank in recent years, Chinese infrastructure development projects in Sudan have focused on exploration and the continual improvement of transportation networks and refineries in Sudan.<sup>246</sup> The China Ex-Im Bank—the single Chinese company allowed to offer concessional loan service to the international market—plays a major role in funding infrastructure development projects in Sudan, and across the African continent.<sup>247</sup> China’s economic interests in Sudan were drastically changed when the 2011 referendum left Sudan split in two, and China’s oil interests with an uneasy future.

## **2. Economic Interests in South Sudan**

The 2011 referendum marking the official recognition of South Sudan as an independent nation opened new challenges for China’s economic interests in the region. The split left South Sudan with approximately 75 percent of the oil fields once shared with its northern neighbor and placed China in a delicate position between Sudan and South Sudan.<sup>248</sup> China’s oil interests were now split, leaving oil fields in South Sudan separate from the vital refineries and ports in Sudan (Figure 10).<sup>249</sup> Chinese infrastructure development projects of the late 1990s and 2000s were now subject to maintaining a stable relationship between two divisions with long histories of violent disputes.

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<sup>244</sup> Ibid.

<sup>245</sup> Ibid.

<sup>246</sup> Ibid., 50.

<sup>247</sup> Ibid., 53.

<sup>248</sup> Nicholas Bariyo, “South Sudan to Resume Oil Exports,” *Wall Street Journal*, sec. World, May 3, 2013, <http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424127887324266904578460432508279580>.

<sup>249</sup> Janet Xuanli Liao, “China’s Energy Diplomacy and Its ‘Peaceful Rise’ Ambition: The Cases of Sudan and Iran,” *Asian Journal of Peacebuilding* 1, no. 2 (2013): 208.

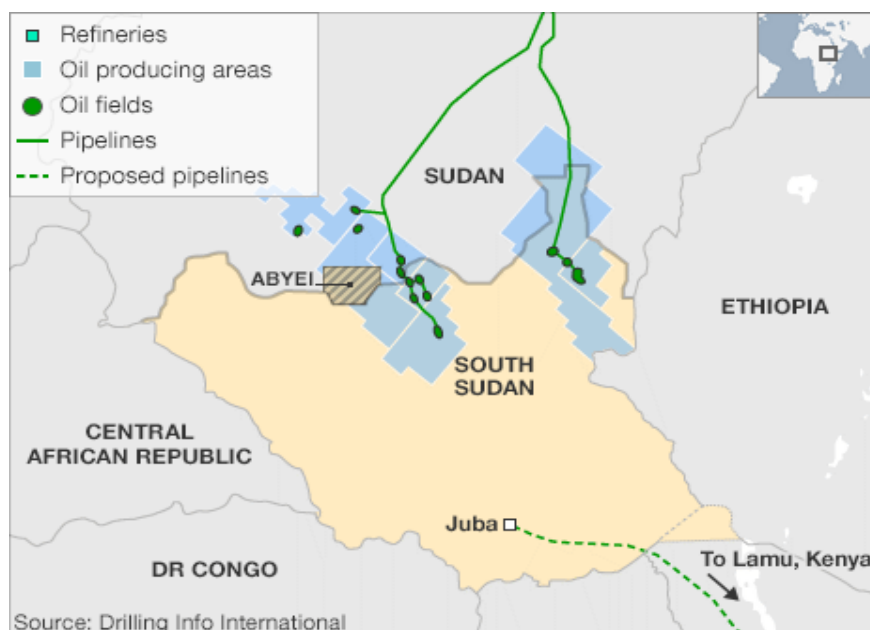


Figure 10. South Sudan Oil Infrastructure<sup>250</sup>

Disputes over oil transit fees in January of 2012 illustrated the difficult situation Chinese policy makers faced in maintaining stability between the two nations. South Sudan's need to utilize Sudan's ports for oil exports resulted in the establishment of transit fees to be paid from South Sudan to Sudan. South Sudan accused Sudan of price gouging and Sudan subsequently began seizing South Sudan's oil. The dispute escalated resulting in South Sudan shutting down its oil production altogether.<sup>251</sup> After approximately 15 months of AU and UN negotiations and a loss of 350,000 barrels of oil per day, the two nations reconciled and oil shipments recommenced April 2013.<sup>252</sup>

Throughout the oil transit fee dispute between Sudan and South Sudan, China took a highly interventionist role in mediating the conflict by initiating talks between both sides and attempting to coerce the South Sudanese officials to end the conflict. China hosted South Sudanese President Salva Kiir in Beijing and directly pressured him

<sup>250</sup> Yuwen Wu, "China's Oil Fears over South Sudan Fighting," *BBC News*, January 8, 2014, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-25654155>.

<sup>251</sup> *Ibid.*, 209–210.

<sup>252</sup> Bariyo, "South Sudan to Resume Oil Exports."

to seek an end to the conflict in April of 2012.<sup>253</sup> During fighting over the Heglig oil field in Sudan in which both Sudan and South Sudan claimed ownership, China attempted to quell the growing violence calling for the withdrawal of South Sudanese forces from the region.<sup>254</sup> China's economic interests were once again challenged in December 2013 when fighting within South Sudan threatened its access to oil in the region.

### **3. Ethnic Conflict in South Sudan**

The eruption of conflict in South Sudan in 2013 led China to perhaps one of its most interventionist roles to date in the international affairs of others. Unlike its early response towards Darfur pre-2007 citing the need to protect sovereignty, China's response to ethnic conflict in South Sudan called for the need to "Protect South Sudan's national interests and its people."<sup>255</sup> The distinct shift from Darfur to South Sudan symbolizes China's move away from its non-intervention strategy and a more Western definition of R2P.

Following South Sudanese President Salva Kiir's accusations of his Vice President, Riek Machar, instigating a coup, South Sudan fell into a violent ethnic conflict. Divided between the ethnic Dinkas (President Kiir) and the ethnic Nuers (Vice President Machar) the conflict has taken a severe humanitarian toll on the struggling nation.<sup>256</sup> With death tolls in the tens of thousands and over one million people displaced, the looming famine threatens to increase long term human rights concerns in the region.<sup>257</sup>

When the conflict grew more violent in January 2014, oil production dropped 20 percent and over 300 Chinese workers were forced to evacuate.<sup>258</sup> With 5 percent of

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<sup>253</sup> Liao, "China's Energy Diplomacy and Its 'Peaceful Rise' Ambition," 210.

<sup>254</sup> Ibid., 209–210; "South Sudan Oil Seizure 'Illegal,'" BBC News, April 19, 2012, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-17780226>.

<sup>255</sup> Zhou Wa, "South Sudan 'Needs Peaceful Solution,'" China Daily-Africa, January 17, 2014, [http://africa.chinadaily.com.cn/weekly/2014-01/17/content\\_17241519.htm](http://africa.chinadaily.com.cn/weekly/2014-01/17/content_17241519.htm).

<sup>256</sup> Sam Jones, "South Sudan: Little to Celebrate as War and Hunger Mar Independence Day," The Guardian, July 8, 2014, sec. Global development, <http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2014/jul/09/south-sudan-famine-conflict-independence-day>.

<sup>257</sup> Ibid.

<sup>258</sup> "China's Oil Fears over South Sudan Fighting," BBC News, January 8, 2014, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-25654155>.



Chinese oil imports arriving from South Sudan and CNPC's plans for further development of its oil fields, China's interests quickly turned to resolving the crisis.<sup>259</sup> Taking the leading role in the Addis Ababa peace talks, Chinese policymakers took an uncharacteristically interventionist approach towards South Sudan.<sup>260</sup> Chinese diplomats, looking to reach a solution as swiftly as possible, matched Western comments condemning the violence and calling for an end to the violence.<sup>261</sup>

The Chinese determination to resolve the conflict in South Sudan contrasts with previous definitions of China's non-intervention strategy. China's desire to reach an end to the conflict was so great that Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi offered to personally lead the peace talk process in January 2014.<sup>262</sup> While the peace talk process eventually failed to end fighting in South Sudan, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang also met individually with each side in attempt to broker peace.<sup>263</sup>

China is not discreet in pointing out its rationale for taking a more interventionist approach to South Sudan. Ma Qiang, Chinese Ambassador to South Sudan, commented on China's reason for intervening in South Sudan, stating in June 2014, "We have huge interests in South Sudan so we have to make a greater effort to persuade the two sides to stop fighting and agree to a ceasefire." Ambassador Ma's comments coincided with China's deployment of a battalion of peacekeeping troops to South Sudan and demonstrate China's decision to increase its level of intervention based on economic interests.<sup>264</sup>

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<sup>259</sup> Drazen Jorgic, "South Sudan's Dwindling Oil Output Forces China to Step in to Protect Its Investments from the Ongoing Rebellion," *The Independent*, June 5, 2014, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/africa/south-sudans-dwindling-oil-output-forces-china-to-step-in-to-protect-its-investments-from-the-ongoing-rebellion-9496895.html>.

<sup>260</sup> Ibid.

<sup>261</sup> Ibid.

<sup>262</sup> Wu, "China's Oil Fears over South Sudan Fighting."

<sup>263</sup> Wang Hui, "More from More of the Same," *China Daily-Africa*, January 17, 2014, [http://africa.chinadaily.com.cn/weekly/2014-01/17/content\\_17241427.htm](http://africa.chinadaily.com.cn/weekly/2014-01/17/content_17241427.htm).

<sup>264</sup> "China to Deploy Peace Keepers in South Sudan," Online, *Africa Live*, CCTV-English, June 24, 2014, <http://english.cntv.cn/2014/06/24/VIDE1403582040594778.shtml>.

Additionally, China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi cites the need for "stability and development" in South Sudan as China's reason for its active mediation efforts.<sup>265</sup> China's economic interests, however, are directly related to South Sudan's development, as 82 percent of the South Sudanese GDP was derived from oil exports.<sup>266</sup> When China defined its interests in South Sudan as needing to restore stability to assist in promoting development, China indirectly declared protecting its economic interests as a driving factor in its interventionist approach.

Zhong Jianhua, China's special representative for African affairs, alluded to China's interest in stabilizing South Sudan's oil flow in 2012 stating,

The diplomatic efforts made by China in solving the Sudan-South Sudan issue have been productive, not only easing the regional tension and promoting the two sides' reaching an agreement on oil revenues sharing, but also consolidating China's relations with both countries.<sup>267</sup>

Zhong's comments demonstrate how China's efforts to reduce violence were based on its economic interests—mainly oil—in the region.

In a conflict largely deemed an ethnic dispute, Chinese definitions of non-intervention from the past would likely oppose taking such an active role in the domestic affairs of Sudan—citing the need to protect sovereignty. The increase in China's oil interests in Sudan and South Sudan, compelled China to reevaluate its typical stance of abstaining from the internal affairs of others. While China's increased economic interests in South Sudan played a major role in its decision to intervene, Western pressure during the Darfur crisis in 2007 carried over to conflicts the 2013–2014 conflicts in South Sudan—pressing China into a more pro-active interventionist role.

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<sup>265</sup> "China's Role in Middle East Will Be Enhanced: FM," China Daily, January 10, 2014, [http://usa.chinadaily.com.cn/epaper/2014-01/10/content\\_17229074.htm](http://usa.chinadaily.com.cn/epaper/2014-01/10/content_17229074.htm).

<sup>266</sup> Alex de Waal, "Sizzling South Sudan," Foreign Affairs, February 7, 2013, <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/138836/alex-de-waal/sizzling-south-sudan>.

<sup>267</sup> Jianhua Zhong, "The Sudan-South Sudan Reconciliation: More Patience and Efforts Needed," *Global Review*, 2012, 2.

### C. WESTERN PRESSURE

Western pressure against China during the Darfur crisis in 2007 turned China's attention towards its increasing inability to abstain from internal issues of its trading partners. This section aims to identify how Western pressure placed on China during the Darfur crisis, translated to China's handling of the South Sudan crisis in 2011 and 2013. In its handling of conflicts post-2007, China proactively initiated peacekeeping efforts in South Sudan to avoid succumbing to the effects of sanctions and reputation costs associated with Western pressure witnessed in Darfur.

The spiraling conflict in Sudan during the Darfur crisis garnered international attention as the world became informed of the growing human rights concerns. The Western backlash over China's support of the Khartoum government during the crisis, resulted in severe reputation costs inflicted to China. In 2006, however, China's indifference began to shift as Western pressure directed towards China began to mount. The West called on China to utilize its unique relationship with Khartoum to broker an end to the violence, and for China to cease selling weapons to Khartoum.<sup>268</sup> Western pressure came in the form of sanctions against the Khartoum regime, and political outcry censuring China's actions and harming China's international reputation. Following the extensive Western pressure towards China, Chinese official Wang Guangya assisted in brokering a peace deal authorizing an increased presence of UN peacekeepers to Sudan during negotiations in Addis Ababa in November 2006.<sup>269</sup> In February 2007, Chinese President Hu Jintao presented a proposal to Khartoum encouraging the Sudanese leadership to accept UN peacekeepers.<sup>270</sup> President Hu's proposal worked, and China's entrance into interventionist politics on the African continent began.

In April 2014, Western pressure once again emerged in South Sudan when sanctions were discussed against South Sudanese individuals caught conducting human

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<sup>268</sup> Large, "China and the Contradictions of 'Non-Interference' in Sudan," 100.

<sup>269</sup> Ibid., 100.

<sup>270</sup> Ibid.

rights abuses or inciting violence.<sup>271</sup> Leading the growing voice of concerned nations for South Sudan, the US initiated the first sanctions on South Sudan in May of 2014.<sup>272</sup> The sanctions added to the July 2011 UN Resolution 1996 creating the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS), which aimed to strengthen the newly formed South Sudanese government.<sup>273</sup> During the 2011 and 2013 conflicts, however, little Western pressure was required to convince China to act. China chose instead to proactively maintain its interventionist role from Darfur—matching the West’s approach towards responding to the crisis in South Sudan.

## **1. South Sudan**

The ethnic conflict in South Sudan introduced yet another foreign policy dilemma for China on the African continent. Severe human rights concerns voiced from the West, once again challenged China’s response to violence in the region. In South Sudan, however, China took a more proactive role than witnessed in Darfur—seeking to resolve the conflict while venturing closer towards Western standards of intervention in the name of the responsibility to protect (R2P). China’s early backing of UN peacekeepers in South Sudan in the name of protecting Sudanese populations and its willingness to act as mediator between the warring factions highlight how lessons from Darfur transferred to China’s handling of the crisis in South Sudan in an effort to avoid the level of Western pressure witnessed in Darfur in 2007.

The violence in South Sudan opened international dialogue concerning the need for intervention under the R2P doctrine<sup>274</sup>. Zhong Jianhua, China’s special representative for African affairs, said peace talks: “Should be to protect South Sudan's national

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<sup>271</sup> “US Authorizes South Sudan Conflict Sanctions,” BBC News-Africa, April 4, 2014, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-26891642>.

<sup>272</sup> “U.S. Imposes First Sanctions on South Sudan,” Al Arabiya News, May 7, 2014, <http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/africa/2014/05/07/U-S-imposes-sanctions-on-South-Sudan-rivals-.html>.

<sup>273</sup> “Establishment of the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS) Resolution 1996,” United Nations Security Council, July 8, 2011, <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/unmiss/>.

<sup>274</sup> “South Sudan Has the Responsibility to Protect Civilians,” South Africa Broadcasting Corporation, April 24, 2014, <http://www.sabc.co.za/news/a/356f750043c06fca9299d2239b19c088/South-Sudan-has-the-responsibility-to-protect-civilians>.

interests and its people.”<sup>275</sup> Zhong’s discussion of the need to protect South Sudanese citizens indicates a potential shift in China’s definition of R2P. As previously discussed, the Western definition of R2P was more forward-leaning than that of China at the time of R2P’s creation. China’s acknowledgement of the need to protect South Sudan’s citizens, demonstrated China’s shifting stance towards intervention in comparison to its previous ‘business over politics’ stance in Darfur pre-2007. UN personnel visiting South Sudan described mass killings and targeting of civilian populations—providing justification for potential war crimes prosecution.<sup>276</sup> China’s support of peacekeeping operations in South Sudan followed in form of a full Chinese infantry battalion of 850 personnel.<sup>277</sup>

On 03 April 2014, President Obama signed an executive order authorizing the use of sanctions against any persons or groups involved in the conflict in South Sudan. The sanctions specifically aimed to stop human rights abuses, attacks against peacekeepers, and any other actions that perpetuate the conflict.<sup>278</sup> Following the U.S. backed sanctions, a Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesman commented “We will make a decision on our position in accordance with the pros and cons.”<sup>279</sup> China’s response differed from that of previous response to sanctions in Darfur in 2007. As previously described, China initially voiced its disapproval of the use of sanctions against Khartoum. Following the April 2014, U.S. initiated sanctions; however, Chinese criticism was non-existent. Additional UN backed sanctions are currently under consideration and could prove—if approved by China—a major indicator of Western pressure influencing China’s actions in South Sudan.<sup>280</sup>

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<sup>275</sup> Wa, “South Sudan ‘Needs Peaceful Solution.’”

<sup>276</sup> “Crisis in South Sudan,” International Coalition for the Responsibility to Protect, accessed July 25, 2014, <http://www.responsibilitytoprotect.org/index.php/crises/crisis-in-south-sudan>.

<sup>277</sup> Drazen Jorgic, “China Takes More Assertive Line in South Sudan Diplomacy,” Reuters, June 5, 2014, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/06/05/us-southsudan-china-insight-idUSKBN0EG00320140605>.

<sup>278</sup> “Executive Order -- Blocking Property of Certain Persons With Respect to South Sudan,” The White House, April 3, 2014, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/04/03/executive-order-blocking-property-certain-persons-respect-south-sudan>.

<sup>279</sup> Michelle Nichols, “U.N. Security Council Members Considering South Sudan Sanctions,” Reuters, April 24, 2014, <http://uk.reuters.com/article/2014/04/24/uk-southsudan-university-sanctions-idUKBREA3N03O20140424>.

<sup>280</sup> Ibid.

Apart from the use of sanctions, China's large-scale UN troop contribution and \$24 million in humanitarian assistance to South Sudan signifies China's increasingly Western approach towards intervention.<sup>281</sup> Instead of remaining distanced from the situation, Chinese policy makers entered into direct talks between parties in a similar fashion to Western methods of conflict resolution. China's mediation efforts towards conflict resolution in South Sudan took a more Western approach at the early onset of peace talks and continued to increase once US-backed sanctions against South Sudan were discussed. Meeting with both sides in peace talks in Addis Ababa, Chinese diplomats worked closely with their Western counterparts in efforts to achieve stability.

China's participation in South Sudan peace talks is in contrast to its typical stance towards mediation—which generally consists of maintaining distance and avoiding direct participation.<sup>282</sup> In choosing to take an active role in peace talks, China is avoiding Western pressure while also improving its status in the international community—attempting to demonstrate to the world it is capable of acting beyond its economic interests. Comments from a Western diplomat assisting in peace negotiations in South Sudan in June 2014 highlight the West's agreement with China's mediation efforts, stating, “The diplomacy of Beijing has clearly stepped up and is more proactive and more responsive now.”<sup>283</sup> China's behavior in South Sudan mediation, matched Western efforts, and therefore Western nations held little reason to place pressure on China.

The reports from Chinese media outlets also indicate a shift in mediation styles towards those typical of the West. As He Wenping articulated in a China Daily news article, “Restoring peace and stability in South Sudan is the common desire of the international community and China is shouldering its responsibilities in trying to facilitate this.”<sup>284</sup> Similar Chinese media articles emphasize China's distinctive role in,

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<sup>281</sup> Li Xiaokun, “Cash and Material Aid to South Sudan,” China Daily-Africa, July 7, 2014, [http://africa.chinadaily.com.cn/weekly/2014-07/04/content\\_17646842.htm](http://africa.chinadaily.com.cn/weekly/2014-07/04/content_17646842.htm).

<sup>282</sup> Jorgic, “South Sudan's Dwindling Oil Output Forces China to Step in to Protect Its Investments from the Ongoing Rebellion.”

<sup>283</sup> Jorgic, “China Takes More Assertive Line in South Sudan Diplomacy.”

<sup>284</sup> He Wenping, “Chance for Peace in South Sudan,” China Daily, January 9, 2014, [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/opinion/2014-01/09/content\\_17224984\\_2.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/opinion/2014-01/09/content_17224984_2.htm).

“facilitating communications among all parties.”<sup>285</sup> Chinese media assisted in bolstering China’s image and selling its new found flexibility concerning non-intervention. Highlighting its own efforts in the mediation process not only contributed to improving the Chinese government’s image domestically, but also internationally.

China’s changed behavior towards South Sudan in 2014 from that witnessed in Darfur pre-2007 is largely the result of China’s increasing desire to improve its international image and avoid the connotation of a “free rider” in the international system. When China is able to demonstrate its effectiveness at resolving conflict through responsible intervention, Western pressure calling China a “free rider” is decreased making China able to more efficiently pursue its political objectives. As witnessed in South Sudan, China’s proactive mediation decreased Western pressure and allowed China to protect its interests with support from the international community.

Western pressure during the Darfur crisis undoubtedly shaped China’s perspective towards handling conflicts on the African continent, which carried over to its pro-active, Western endorsed intervention in South Sudan. Western pressure against China in the South Sudan conflict has remained fairly non-existent—largely because China is acting in a manner that resembles Western standards of intervention. China’s proactive approach towards mediation and its contribution of troops, has left little reason for Western pressure to arise.

#### **D. AFRICAN PRESSURE**

Expectations about China and its involvement in African issues are quite high, especially as China, with its strategy of being a good friend, good partner and good brother, has been a source of inspiration for several African nations.<sup>286</sup>

—Zhong Jianhua, Chinese Special Representative for African Affairs  
(Discussing South Sudan Mediation Efforts)

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<sup>285</sup> Wa Zhou, “China to Step up Efforts to Find Peace in South Sudan,” China Daily-Africa, January 18, 2014, Online Edition edition, sec. World-Africa, [http://usa.chinadaily.com.cn/world/2014-01/18/content\\_17242888.htm](http://usa.chinadaily.com.cn/world/2014-01/18/content_17242888.htm).

<sup>286</sup> Wa, “South Sudan ‘Needs Peaceful Solution.’”

The destructive nature of the conflict in South Sudan posed—and continues to pose—a significant threat to peace and stability of the greater East African region. The geographic location of South Sudan presents potential spillover effects into neighboring Central African Republic and Democratic Republic of Congo, which both currently have deadly conflicts of their own. Neighboring Uganda, fearful of increased spillover into its borders, offered troops and military assistance to the South Sudanese government.<sup>287</sup> The conflict in South Sudan threatens to destabilize the entire region and introduce long term humanitarian strife. Because of the regional threat to east Africa, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and African Union (AU) pressed the international community—largely China—to assist in ending the violence in South Sudan.

### **1. Regional and Sub-regional Organizations**

From the beginning of the conflict, the African Union (AU) strongly criticized those responsible for violence in South Sudan. The AU threatened sanctions in hopes of reducing the level of violence in South Sudan, but as has been witnessed across the continent, ultimately held little ability in sustaining peacekeeping operations.<sup>288</sup> The power of the AU in South Sudan, however, rested on its ability to provide regional legitimacy towards requesting outside assistance in resolving the conflict. Requests from the AU and sub-regional organizations such as IGAD presented China the local request required under Chinese foreign policy—therefore forcing China to intervene, or erode its legitimacy as a “good friend, good partner, good brother” to African nations.<sup>289</sup>

IGAD Executive Secretary, Mahboub M. Maalim, requested Chinese support in resolving the conflict in South Sudan when he “urged the International Community and all stakeholders in South Sudan to support the commendable work by the humanitarian

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<sup>287</sup> Nicholas Bariyo, “Uganda Calls for Urgent Deployment of Troops in South Sudan,” *Wall Street Journal*, May 20, 2014, sec. World, <http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424052702304198504579573493421255118>.

<sup>288</sup> “Crisis in South Sudan”; Martin Plaut, “African Union Missing in Action in Conflicts from Mali to South Sudan,” *The Guardian*, January 6, 2014, sec. Global development, <http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2014/jan/06/african-union-missing-action-conflicts-mali-south-sudan>.

<sup>289</sup> Wa, “South Sudan ‘Needs Peaceful Solution.’”



actors to enable them reach all those directly affected by the violence.”<sup>290</sup> China responded to IGAD’s request by sending delegates to an IGAD meeting in December 2013. At the meeting, deputy Chinese foreign minister, Zhang Ming, articulated, ““As South Sudan's friend and partner, China calls on all sides of the conflict to...immediately cease hostile actions, and open negotiations as soon as possible.”<sup>291</sup>

South Sudan’s President, Salva Kiir, also called on the international community for assistance in restoring security in South Sudan. In May 2014, President Kiir addressed 40 African leaders during a trip to South Africa calling for a protection force to assist in defeating rebel forces under the leadership of Riek Machar.<sup>292</sup> Along with requests from regional and sub-regional organizations, South Sudan itself also called for international support in resolving the crisis. The strong amount of African pressure on China, incurred high reputation costs should China decide to abstain from assisting in South Sudan, and therefore motivated China’s move towards intervention.

From the Chinese perspective, African nations prefer Chinese mediation efforts over those of the West based on the increased trust between China and African countries. As Special Representative for African Affairs, Zhong Jianhua, told China Daily, “African nations like South Sudan view China and its mediation efforts in a completely different light, given that China has never invaded African countries, nor hurt the self-esteem of African people.”<sup>293</sup> China’s intervention in South Sudan at the request of the AU and IGAD, seeks to maintain trust between African nations and China. If it is to maintain its “unique” relationship with the African continent, China’s role will continue to grow increasingly interventionist as requests for Chinese assistance will undoubtedly increase.

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<sup>290</sup> “The Executive Secretary of IGAD Commends South Sudan for Progress towards Peaceful Resolution of the Conflict,” Intergovernmental Authority on Development, December 2013, [http://igad.int/attachments/729\\_Statement\\_of\\_IGAD\\_Executive\\_Secretary\\_Ambassador\\_Mahboub\\_Maali\\_m\\_on\\_South\\_Sudan.pdf](http://igad.int/attachments/729_Statement_of_IGAD_Executive_Secretary_Ambassador_Mahboub_Maali_m_on_South_Sudan.pdf).

<sup>291</sup> Adam Rose, “China Calls for an End to Fighting in South Sudan,” Reuters, December 25, 2013, <http://uk.reuters.com/article/2013/12/25/uk-southsudan-unrest-china-idUKBRE9BO00U20131225>.

<sup>292</sup> “South Sudan President Solicits Immediate Deployment of Regional Forces,” *Sudan Tribune*, May 24, 2014, <http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article51116>.

<sup>293</sup> Xiaokun, “Cash and Material Aid to South Sudan.”

Requests for Chinese intervention from regional and sub-regional organizations will likely increase as China continues to develop strong ties with the African continent. China's preference to act through multilateral organizations means African regional and sub-regional organizations may come to expect assistance from China—therefore bringing China further into meddling in domestic affairs. China's statements asserting its image in Africa as mutually beneficial and a friend to all, increased China's desire to intervene in Sudan and South Sudan. Under the pillars of China's non-intervention driven foreign policy, intervention is allowed when a nation requests assistance. If China had ignored requests from South Sudan for assistance, it would have faced decreased reputation costs on the continent and harmed its title as mutually beneficial partner—decreasing its ability to achieve political objectives elsewhere. Similar to the crisis in Mali, Western-backed calls for China to intervene, without African pressure to back it up, would likely fall short in pressing Chinese foreign policy towards intervention.

## **E. CONCLUSION**

The conflict in South Sudan is an internally driven ethnic conflict that previous definitions of China's non-intervention strategy would have characterized as the responsibility of the host nation to resolve. Because of its strong economic interests, combined with African pressure, China's foreign policy in South Sudan evolved to highly interventionist role. China's actions pre-2007, demonstrate its strict definition of non-intervention, while its action post-2007 highlight its move to a highly interventionist approach towards South Sudan. The dispute between Sudan and South Sudan, along with the internal fighting in South Sudan, introduced a serious threat to China's supply of oil in the region. Non-intervention in both conflicts proved too costly to Chinese infrastructure and oil supply, leading China to seek a direct role in mediation efforts.

China's past methods of finding energy resources where others dare not venture, has placed Chinese economic interests in highly volatile regions. This means China will likely continue to find itself faced with the decision to intervene to protect its economic interests and secure its domestic growth. When Western nations have relatively low

interests in a prominent trading partner of China, China will be forced to take the lead in protecting its own economic interests and likely be compelled towards direct intervention as witnessed in South Sudan.<sup>294</sup>

The crisis in Darfur offers a prime example of how Western pressure was able to shape Chinese foreign policy. Western sanctions and reputation costs challenged China's economic interests and threatened to disrupt China's ability to achieve its foreign policy objectives in Sudan. International uproar over China's actions in Sudan detracted from the positive image China hoped to gain from its hosting of the 2008 Olympics—highlighting the increased responsibilities a growing China must consider. China's early and direct mediation efforts in the South Sudan conflict represent China's more Western approach to conflict resolution following lessons learned from Darfur.

China acting as a responsible power in South Sudan mediation efforts has lessened the potential for Western pressure against China's interests in the region. With China's acceptance of Western norms, it has been able to petition the UN to assist in protecting Chinese economic interests in South Sudan.<sup>295</sup> China's assumed role as 'responsible mediator' in contrast to its past as a 'reluctant bystander' has reduced the threat of international efforts to restrict China's growth, and allowed it to increase its reputation as a global power.

Pressures from the African continent were also instrumental in shaping China's decision to intervene in both Darfur, and in South Sudan. Regional organizations, sub-regional organizations, and requests from South Sudan provided the local request prompting China to towards intervention. Working with the AU and IGAD, China was able to maintain its perceived trust with African nations and promote itself as a mutual-

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<sup>294</sup> Shannon Tiezzi, "In South Sudan Conflict, China Tests Its Mediation Skills," *The Diplomat*, June 6, 2014, <http://thediplomat.com/2014/06/in-south-sudan-conflict-china-tests-its-mediation-skills/>.

<sup>295</sup> Colum Lynch, "U.N. Peacekeepers to Protect China's Oil Interests in South Sudan," *Foreign Policy Blogs*, June 16, 2014, [http://thecable.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2014/06/15/un\\_peacekeepers\\_to\\_protect\\_chinas\\_oil\\_interests\\_in\\_south\\_sudan](http://thecable.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2014/06/15/un_peacekeepers_to_protect_chinas_oil_interests_in_south_sudan).

benefit partner. Once China moved into the role as direct mediator, however, new foreign policy challenges will continue to compel China towards intervention across the continent to protect its interests.

## V. CONCLUSION

China's evolution away from a non-interventionist driven foreign policy on the African continent provides insight into China's potential emerging role in global affairs. As China continues to grow and strengthen its international image, a non-interventionist foreign policy creates friction between China's domestic goals and its foreign policy goals. No longer is China able to abstain from conflicts on the African continent when economic interests, Western pressure, and African pressure coerce its attention in the internal affairs of African nations.

This chapter aims to first, provide a summary of findings for the Mali and Sudan case studies. Analyzing China's actions towards Mali and Sudan provide evidence of China's evolution away from non-intervention. In each case study, China increased its level of intervention in support of its economic interests, and in avoidance or adherence to Western and African pressures. Second, comparisons between the two interventions will be provided to describe China's role in Mali and Sudan, and how China took a more proactive approach towards intervention during the South Sudan conflict in 2014. Finally, additional information concerning future implications for the United States will be provided.

### A. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The Mali and Sudan case studies provide a useful look at China's evolution from non-intervention, to intervention in the domestic affairs of African nations. China's continued assurance to African nations that it seeks a "mutual beneficial" relationship in fulfilling the needs of China and African nations aims to set it apart from Western nations accused of over structuring aid programs based on Western ideals.<sup>296</sup> In the case of Mali and Sudan, however, China's long histories with both nations shifted dramatically following China's initial economic boom in the 1990s. China gradually became more involved in the politics of Mali and Sudan, and struggled to detach its economic interests

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<sup>296</sup> He Wen Ping, "China's African Policy," *Africa Review* 1, no. 1 (2009): 43, doi:10.1080/09744053.2009.10597279.

from its political ambitions in each nation.<sup>297</sup> The growing trend reached a decision point in 2007, when China faced growing Western criticism to act more responsibly in Sudan. The overall policy of China to seek economic relations in volatile regions, presents continued foreign policy challenges towards China as it increases its efforts to internationally source its domestic growth.<sup>298</sup> The two cases studied highlight how China's economic interests, Western pressure, and African pressure all combined to reshape China's non-intervention driven foreign policy towards African nations.

### **1. Economic Interests**

In both Mali and Sudan, China's economic interests centered on the expansive Chinese infrastructure projects built to assist in the extraction of natural resources throughout each nation—particularly in Sudan and South Sudan's oil fields. Infrastructure protection and the protection of Chinese citizens became an increasingly important part of China's decision to intervene in Mali and in the Sudan region. China sought assistance from the Malian and Sudanese governments during instability, but was ultimately left sending combat units of its own to participate in peacekeeping.<sup>299</sup> Disputes between Sudan and South Sudan disrupted the flow of Chinese oil imports through Chinese built pipelines transiting from South Sudan into Sudan.

The Mali case highlights the difficulties Africa's porous borders present towards economic investment on the continent. The instability in northern Mali, threatened to spill over into neighboring Niger—in which China holds a significant stake in uranium mining. China's other investment activity on the continent present a similar challenge in nations such as Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in which conflict easily spreads across borders.

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<sup>297</sup> Daniel Large, "China and the Contradictions," 93.

<sup>298</sup> Ibid., 105.

<sup>299</sup> Luka B. Deng Kuol, "South Sudan-China Relations: A Reversed Courtship," *Sudan Tribune*, June 26, 2014, <http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article51469>; "China Asks Malian Government to Protect Nationals' Safety: FM Spokesman" *CCTV News*, accessed August 25, 2014, <http://english.cntv.cn/20130117/108128.shtml>.

China's \$9.25 billion copper and cobalt agreement with DRC's President Joseph Kabila in 2008 contradicted Western efforts to hold President Kabila accountable for poor governance and human rights violations.<sup>300</sup> Accusations from insurgent leader, Laurent Nkunda—a former DRC army general turned rebel leader who led a rebellion against the DRC government—claimed China's actions in DRC were undermining reconciliation efforts in DRC. Nkunda's accusations and pressure from the West led China to deploy an envoy to DRC to mediate peacekeeping efforts between the DRC and neighboring Rwanda. China's mediation efforts assisted in reducing Rwandan support of Nkunda and thereby reducing tensions in the region. Since 2008, China has continued to provide peacekeepers in DRC to assist with infrastructure development and medical care.<sup>301</sup>

The Mali and Sudan case studies provide details as to how China's economic interests drove its movement away from non-intervention. China gave a high amount of FDI to both countries and was heavily invested in not only the nations themselves, but also the surrounding regions. The protection of its investments and maintaining access to natural resources, appear to have significantly influenced China's actions in each case study.

## **2. Western Pressure**

Two forms of Western pressure were present in the cases studied—Western backed norm adherence and direct Western criticism of China's actions. Under the Western backed norms category, Chinese officials cited terrorism as rationale for intervention in Mali. In the past, China criticized the U.S. war on terror as a means to project U.S. hegemony throughout the world. China's stance on fighting terrorism shifted, however, and took a more Western approach to intervention in Mali to avoid Western criticism accusing China of being a “free-rider” in international politics.

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<sup>300</sup> “China's Growing Role in UN Peacekeeping, International Crisis Group, April 17, 2009, 16, [http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/asia/north-east-asia/166\\_chinas\\_growing\\_role\\_in\\_un\\_peacekeeping.ashx](http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/asia/north-east-asia/166_chinas_growing_role_in_un_peacekeeping.ashx).

<sup>301</sup> Ibid.

Adhering to the Western norm of anti-terrorism allowed China to protect its interests in Mali, while also improving its image as a responsible actor on the African continent.

In Sudan, Western pressure took the form of direct US criticism towards Chinese actions concerning its relationship with Khartoum. The West—mainly the U.S.—criticized China’s support of the Khartoum regime’s actions towards Darfur. The U.S. criticism detracted from China’s hosting of the Beijing Olympics—an event that China hoped would promote its “success story” rise from poverty to a global economic power. The pressure ultimately encouraged China to reshape its message to the Sudanese regime, and assist in promoting a solution to the conflict in Sudan. Western pressure from the crisis in Darfur, translated over to China’s actions with Sudan and South Sudan in 2011 and 2013. When the U.S. initiated the first round of Sanctions on South Sudan, China failed to condemn or approve the sanctions, but did step up its mediation efforts. Once again wanting to avoid the “free-rider” stigma, China chose to take a pro-active role in peacekeeping efforts in South Sudan and lead mediation efforts between the warring factions.

The Mali and Sudan case studies identify the important role Western pressure plays on shaping China’s evolution away from non-intervention. China’s economic growth allows it to take a more active role in international affairs, but its adherence to Western pressure allows it the opportunity for political influence as well. Moving beyond a purely economic power requires China’s adherence to Western norms to reduce the effect of Western pressure and friction from the international community. When China adheres to Western norms—mainly those established by the United States, it faces less balancing, and is therefore able to focus on domestic growth without needing to counteract U.S. pressure. Both Mali and Sudan provide important examples of how China’s decision to conform to Western norms reduced pressure from the international community and allowed it to achieve its foreign policy objectives.

### **3. African Pressure**

Mali and Sudan demonstrate the strong influence African nations wield on China’s decision to intervene in the domestic affairs of others. The historical relationship



between China and many African nations is based on China's ideas of "peaceful coexistence" and "mutually beneficial" partnerships. When China conducts business in an African nation but is unwilling to support peacekeeping interventions when requested, China's relationship with African nations appears much less "mutually beneficial" and more one-sided. For China to match its rhetoric with reality, it must seek a lead role in peacekeeping operations when African nations request assistance.

The Mali and Sudan case demonstrate how China's growing influence on the continent have also increased its expectations from African nations to assist. In the case of Mali, ECOWAS directly called on China for assistance in peacekeeping operations. As China continues to bolster its economic and political ties with African nations, requests for China's assistance will undoubtedly increase, and make China's decision to intervene easier.

China's actions in Sudan and South Sudan also demonstrate its role in mediation efforts with nations generally hesitant to work with the U.S. China's longstanding relationship with Sudan and South Sudan, allowed it to wield coercive power unavailable to the U.S. When it decides to act responsibly on the continent, China's exclusive relationships with African nations outside U.S. influence provide important mechanisms for mediation efforts. Overtime, however, African nations may become weary of China's stance as a true contender to U.S. hegemony on the continent should China too closely match U.S. policy.

## **B. IMPLICATIONS OF CHINA'S SHIFTING FOREIGN POLICY**

China's shift away from non-intervention on the African continent signals a potentially new era for U.S.—China relations on the continent. Achieving peace and stability on the African continent is in the best interests of both the U.S. and China. A responsible China—promoting development and security in African nations—assists in building the capacity of nations on the continent, and in turn, assists in achieving U.S. policy objectives. China's increased risk tolerance compared to that of Western nations, allows it to assist potentially in development in areas outside typical Western focus. China's willingness to engage in infrastructure programs in comparison to the West,

provides opportunities to complement U.S. backed development programs.<sup>302</sup> Overall, should China choose to act responsible in African nations, its actions have the potential to advance the interests of all.

With some arguing the U.S. is entering into a period of reduced commitments in international affairs as a result of budget constraints and war weariness, China's responsibilities in African nations will likely increase.<sup>303</sup> African nations in which China maintains considerable economic interests in comparison to those of the U.S. present the likelihood China will be expected to take the lead in mediation and peacekeeping efforts. With the 90 percent decrease in U.S. imports of African oil since 2010, it is likely U.S. policy will continue to turn more heavily towards multilateralism and leave a majority of the efforts to those with higher stakes in the region—as witnessed in Mali.<sup>304</sup>

China's increased investment in volatile African nations requires its increased diligence in political mediation. Lessons learned from the strained mediation efforts in South Sudan demonstrate the steep learning curve Chinese policymakers face in achieving peace and security through mediation in African nations. When Chinese brokered peace deals broke down in South Sudan and violence raged on, Chinese mediators realized the harsh reality that is mediation. With potentially less U.S. involvement on the horizon, China's domestic energy sourcing will become more dependent on China's own efforts in maintaining stability in trading partners, and seeking solutions to conflicts when they arise.

China's shift from non-intervention on the African continent presents new challenges for China's ability to abstain from future conflicts. In adhering to its role as "mutually-beneficial" partner to African nations, China's responsibilities to intervene in domestic affairs requires it to act when requested. The precedence set in Mali and Sudan

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<sup>302</sup> Todd A. Hofstedt, "China in Africa: An AFRICOM Response," *Naval War College Review* 62, no. 3 (2009): 82.

<sup>303</sup> Joseph Parent M and Paul K. MacDonald, "The Wisdom of Retrenchment," *Foreign Affairs*, =December 2011, <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/136510/joseph-m-parent-and-paul-k-macdonald/the-wisdom-of-retrenchment>.

<sup>304</sup> Matthew Philips, "U.S. Oil Imports From Africa Are Down 90 Percent," *BusinessWeek: Global Economics*, May 22, 2014, <http://www.businessweek.com/articles/2014-05-22/u-dot-s-dot-oil-imports-from-africa-down-90-percent>.

limit China's ability to abstain from intervention in other nations—specifically when significant economic interests are present. The “slippery slope” of intervention beginning in Mali and Sudan, mean China's ability to return to its more strict definition of non-intervention is highly unlikely.

In seeking to maintain influence on the African continent, the U.S. must seek to strengthen its support to African nations. Assuring African nations that U.S. interests lay beyond counter-terrorism is essential towards promoting U.S. long-term policy goals on the continent.<sup>305</sup> The U.S. policy of good governance promotion on the African continent is essential in checking China should it fail to act responsibly in its dealings with African nations. As both Mali and Sudan demonstrate, Western pressure has the power to influence China to act responsibly on the African continent when required.

While China's increasing influence in Africa is not a “zero-sum game” for U.S.-China relations, U.S. leadership is paramount in checking China's actions on the continent and insuring the interests of all are advanced. The strength of U.S. policy is in its protection of human rights and its promotion of good governance programs across the continent. The U.S. strategy towards Sub-Saharan Africa, focuses on building democratic institutions and strengthening transparency in government.<sup>306</sup> U.S. leadership on the continent is essential towards promoting good governance as a main pillar of the development process in African nations—particularly in addition to China's economic first development strategy. Despite potential inclinations to disengage from Sub-Saharan Africa in a budget-constrained environment, U.S. leadership is crucial towards strengthening democratic institutions to promote long-term stability on the continent.

Identifying areas of high Chinese economic interests—mainly infrastructure and natural resource deposits—assists in predicting China's response towards conflict in that region. When able to understand China's response to conflict, U.S. policymakers can monitor China's actions and direct Western pressure should China fail to act responsibly.

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<sup>305</sup> Hofstedt, “China in Africa,” 94.

<sup>306</sup> U. S. Embassy, “U.S. Strategy Toward Sub-Saharan Africa,” 2013, 2, <http://london.usembassy.gov/africa117.html>.

At the same time, measuring the strength of African pressure allows U.S. policymakers to better direct their efforts towards mediation—based on the feedback from African nations.

The United States Africa Command (AFRICOM) is an increasingly important mechanism in which to project U.S. leadership on the continent through its building of partnerships and its role in fulfilling the U.S. strategy towards Sub-Saharan Africa. In providing military training to African partners, the U.S. is able to build trust and assure its intentions are for the benefit of the continent as a whole.<sup>307</sup> Understanding how China's economic interests, Western pressure, and African pressure shape China's non-intervention strategy, assists AFRICOM in tailoring its efforts towards the continent.

AFRICOM's ability to train and maintain partnerships on the African continent bolsters the capabilities of African nations and reduces their dependency on outside intervention. AFRICOM's positive influence on the continent contributes towards building mutual respect relationships with African nations—which encourages them to seek U.S. partnerships without the need for competing with China over influence on the continent.<sup>308</sup> Focusing on the needs of African nations over the needs of competition with China intrinsically assists in assuring U.S.—backed development goals remain properly identified and accomplishable. The United States must continue to promote the ideals of good governance and human rights that will lead to long-term success on the African continent.

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<sup>307</sup> Hofstedt, "China in Africa," 95.

<sup>308</sup> *Ibid.*, 96.

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